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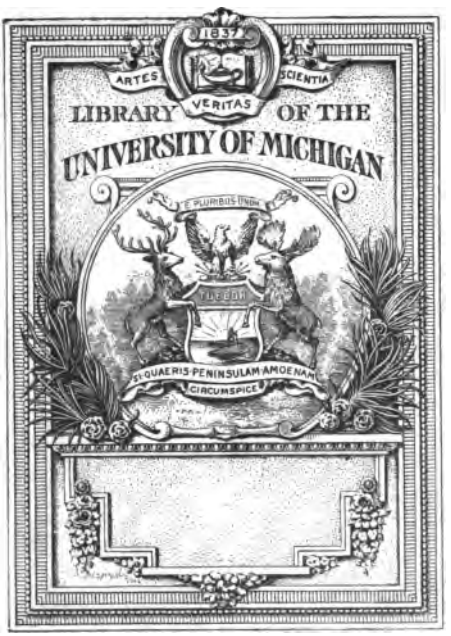
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Mountain State Gleanings

IGNATIUS BRENNAN

BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS
1911

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The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

I very affectionately dedicate this little volume to my wife, FANNIE, who (poor girl) had to listen to the readings of all my "original manuscripts."

To My Reader:

In the following verses you may find one or two that may appeal to you and if you do, I am satisfied.

You may call them by any name you wish, and again, I am happy.

Being a commercial traveller the most of my life, the majority, by far the majority, of my verses were written on the train, as I was carried hither and thither through the "Little Mountain State"—Hence the name—Mountain State Gleanings.

Having penned them mostly enroute this readily saves me the trouble in accounting for the twists in my poetic feet and the kinks in my meter.

I will ask you to take your time and read them all, when, possibly, you might be able to guess at what I tried to tell.

The Literary critics (if the unexpected should happen that my work should be brought to their notice) will naturally make a few spacious incisions here and there, (mostly in both places,) but as I have never bothered these boys much I suppose they will let it pass by with an occasional body bruise.

So with these few remarks I leave myself in your hands.

Sincerely yours,

IGNATIUS BRENNAN.

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CONTENTS

The Sea and Life 11
The Fletcherizing Process 12
Farmish Ailments 14
Ain't It 18
To The Memory of Justus Eakin 19
The Candidate 20
A Chat (?) With Death 21
Farmish Dealings 24
Cupid's Questions—Cupid's Answers 26
My Lost Lenore 27
The Fidgetty Buyer 29
Independence Day 30
Why Bob Missed the Fair 31
In West Virginia 32
Her Christmas Shopping 34
'Tis Christmas Morn 35
The Nigger 36
She Changed Her Opinion—Some 38
The Passing of Rube 39
The Old Time Drummer's Gone 40
The Christmas Smile 42
To the Literary Critics 44
Easter Day 45
The Hardluck Salesman's Soliloquy 46
Christmas Philosophy 48
To the Natural Bridge of Virginia 50
Reflections on Walnut Grove Cemetery 52
The Editress 54
Santa is Coming 56
Love, Courtship and Honeymoon 57
Autumn 58
What's the Use 60

CONTENTS

"Davis"—"Elkins" 61
Free America 63
That Awful, Awful "No" 64
The Day We Wear The Green 67
Monongah 68
The Locomotive Engineer 69
One Flag; One People 71
Play Ball 71
Memorial Day 72
Thanksgiving Day 73
Thanksgiving 74
To a Marble Shaft 75
The Church End-Hog 76
'Tis Easter Morn 77
To a Skeleton 67
Halloween 78
The Model Husband 79
Death 80
The Policeman 81
To France 82
When You've Got The Tonsilitis 84
Then and Now 85
Maud Muller 87
The Rape of Nature 89
Before and After—Matrimony 90
The Dago and Hunky 91
To Lincoln 92
Those Coffin-Lid Flowers 93
Cosmopolitan West Virginia 95
West Virginia 96
This Christmas Day 97
Uncle "Welt" 98

CONTENTS

The Sister 99
How Zeke Got Acquainted With Jim.....103
William Alexander Brown 106
"Died in his Cell" 111
The Joiner 113
Just Odd—That's All 118
The Rhymster's Soliloguy 120
When She Went to Market in 1889.....123
John Downey—Drummer—Editor.....124
Hez Hiley 130
Farmish Reminiscing 137
Josiah Hart 144
The Story of Tom and Scales.....148
To the Sweet Girl Graduate.....155

THE SEA AND LIFE

Out from my window I watch the life
  Of the ever restless sea;
Watch the waves in their awful strife,
  On their run to destiny.
And what a picture of life they give
As they rush to death, when they should but live.

I see them first as they rise and fall,
  At Neptune's stern command,
And how I pity their reckoned (?) call,
  To be dashed to spray at land.
But ne'er content with their hallowed store,
'Till rent to naught on the cruel shore.

And then the picture of life I see,
  Is the lad and lass at home;
Where all is peace and love. And free
  As the Eden bird—to roam.
But they court Euterpe, (tinselled god)
Prefer her path to the one they'd trod.

Now, all is fashion and dress and pride,
  Where sentiment is stilled;
And they float to the sea with ingoing tide,
  And do as their god has willed.
They sing to the strains of Erate,
With paltry court to Calliope.

They've scaled, they feel, the Matterhorn,
  Of wooed society,
And leap each crevasse—night and morn,
  In perfect ecstasy;
But their minds ne'er turn to the paths first trod,
When all was home with thoughts of God.

But, like the wave in middle sea,
  Where it is at its best,
Drunk, from sheer triumphancy,
  They change their course to West

They feel, by them, success (?) is won—
Their pilot steers o'er a course that's run.

We see them in the maddened crush,
  Bounding on to shore;
Lost at times in the ruthless rush,
  There, in sight, once more.
We've seen their zenith—triumphing day—
We see them now like the wave—in spray.

THE FLETCHERIZING PROCESS

I see, by things hygienic, that the very latest fad,
  Is to "Fletcherize" your victuals, whether they be good or bad.
And, no matter what you're paying, be the price so high or low,
  Let our watchword, without question, be so surely—"Chew it slow."
Now this Fletcherizing process beats the masticating kind,
  As when you'd chewed—the old style way—to satisfy your mind,
You'd then adjust your gullet, in the real receiving quest,
  Open up and twist your tongue and the grub would do the rest;
And when this grub, so downward bent, its destination hit,
  Then the stomach's regimentals, all at once, took charge of it,
And by processes, so inward, of the old digestive sort,
  Would assimilate so nicely, and consider it great sport
To give this new consignment of half-masticated hash
  The simplest battle of its life; then send it with a smash
To the other hungry organs, yet awaiting it below.

Which in turn, would do their duty (in the only style they know);
And from the time it started on its nourishing sojourn,
It paid a welcome visit to each organ in its turn.
And long before these pre-digested foodings hove in sight,
Our outsides and our insides worked so happy, day and night,
Now, to the Fletcheristic—I'll explain it if I can—
And all its theorizing towards longevity of man:
You must ne'er attempt to swallow till you've chewed to liquid style,
Everything so mouthward lifted, from baked beans to castor-"ile"—
Spring chicken and potatoes, sweet tenderloin and pie,
Spare ribs, sauerkraut and sausage, hot tamales, oyster fry,
Corn bread and sister buttermilk, pale ale and Dublin Stout.
Must all be chewed to liquid, then, spit the solids out.
You have often seen the mother teach the children how to chew,
(Of course you don't remember when your mother first taught you);
How she'll take the juicy beefsteak, and hold on to one end,
While his lordship (that's the baby) all the seasoned juice will send,
To the regions where Dame Nature had intended it should go,
To stimulate the system, in its wanderings to and fro.
You remember, later on in life, when you had older grown,
And your dear indulgent parents thought you'd judgment of your own;
When you'd taken in a chunk of steak and chew and chew and chew,

And the more you chewed and twisted why the larger sir steak grew,
With the comp'ny looking at you as the gristle you would twist,
To do the swell disgorging act as big as John L's fist;
When your wits would try to figure out a place this chunk to hide
Till it finally found a haven in your pocket on the side?
Well, that was what we called ill-bred in those dear days long past;
Now, that's the Fletcheristic act and fashionable at last.
Now, for those who want to Fletcherize, just do it all you may,
You can call me real old-fashioned with a rather "sotted way,"
But I'll always use my stomach as I have done in the past,
And I'll give it good and plenty while my buying power will last,
Of corned beef and potatoes, fried cabbage and boiled ham,
And for folks like our friend Fletcher—Well, I don't give a damn.

FARMISH AILMENTS

Now the ailments in the country, though of bad enough degree,
Differed from the city ones, and less variety.
Now a case of 'pendicitis was never known about;
And you'd never see a farmer go a limpin' with the gout.
Chronic indigestion or a case of syncope
Were scarce as the proverbialish hen-teeth e'er will be.
And cases of delirium produced by alcohol,

Were very few and far between—in fact were none at all.
As when a farmer took it in his head to have a spree,
He usually got broke before he reached the bad degree.
Cases of hysteria were ne'er recorded there;
And if one died from nervousness, it wasn't on the square.
Small-pox and yellow fever never entered in the race,
And had we seen a yellow flag to designate the place
Whereat some dread infection was at work on some poor soul,
Why every neighbor in the place would go there to console
The sick one and the family, and never would retreat
Until they found out something that the sick would care to eat
And then it made no difference how much the doctor knew,
"Why so and so had taken it and helped to pull him through."
So in 'twould come, and if he could, the sick would gulp it down,
Then usu'ly some neighbors took the measure in to town,
For the best casket, for the price (which wasn't very strong),
And after hours of dickering they'd fetch the thing along,
And place the fellow in it, with his hands clasped as in prayer,
And the fellow mostly used one eye to see they did it fair.
Then after one or two sad nights of singing hymns and psalms,
They'd lay the fellow (head to west) beneath the "shelt'ring palms.'

And then the consolations to the living ones began,
And never in their lives they'd known of such a "lovely man,"
Of course, (as I said 'long at first) their sicknesses were few,
But when it came they got it right, and scarcely e'er pulled through.
The doctor lived some distance and his trips were far between;
And he always diagnosed the case "the worst I've ever seen."
And when it terminated in the sick ones sad demise,
The doctor simply added that to him 'twas no surprise;
Then his bill in due time was the regular routine thing,
Which gener'ly was settled 'long 'bout "wool time" in the spring.
But let me add, us country folks, had not the proper show,
As the doctors in the section are the ones that come and go—
That is they get a "sheep-skin" that they have the first degree;
Then locate in the country where they try their hand to see
If they can pull their patients "throu," and if they can—why then
Collect their bill for services (?) then hike to school again.
And just about the time they get so's they can guess it out,
They move into the city or suburbs or thereabout.
And they'll tell you 'long in later life—their "practice" did them good.
When they practiced, head and tail-like—in our country neighborhood.
We have, of course, our ailments say the infantilish kind,
From which we all recovered, that is, all I have in mind.

For instance take the measles and the mumps and whoopin' cough,
Chicken-pox and pink-eye—rarely took our people off.
But fevers and consumption and the "rheumatiz" and so,
Why nine to one the owner would just "take his clothes and go."
And though usu'ly good guessers we could rarely ever guess,
Just where he went because he left no post-office address.
Then another thing, in spring-time was the hollow chested cough,
Which came in early "Aprile" when we'd take our woolens off;
And lasted sometimes "long towards fall", and sometimes longer too;
And many's the time we've seen our friends a carry-in' it through
The long and dreary winter to another spring, and then—
You'd hear the neighbors figurin'—especially the men—
On just about how long before he'd reckon in the sheaves
All garnered by old Father Time. The "fallin' of the leaves"
Was their specific limit to afflicted one like he;
As just about the time they knew the "Lord would set him free
From all this old world's cares and strifes—when he'd be called to go
To his eternal happiness—from this sinful world below."
And I've watched, and their predictions 'round the neighborhood just flew,
Then the fellow'd quit a doctoring and get religion too;
Then when his system's so run down to give old Death a fight,

The news would spread like wildfire,
"Brother Booher died last night."
Then the usual arrangements for the funeral were made;
And we all enjoyed a holiday, when some poor soul was laid
Away though prematurely in his last chill resting place,
And sung right into Heaven, in Oh! so short a space
Of time that one might question in the greatest of surprise
About how far's the distance to these "Mansions in the Skies."

AIN'T IT——

When the wrinkles grow deep in the back of your neck;
When the crow feet extend from the eye to the ear;
When your clothes, once so trim, now resemble a wreck;
When you walk in the gloaming with exquisite fear;
When the fence that you've vaulted seems ever so high;
When your yearnings for bed-time come gradually too;
When the hair from your head leaves the scalp high and dry;
When the comforts of home are *such* solace to you;
When your seventeen collars's three sizes too big;
When the skin hangs in festoons, just back of the chin;
When the feet are cold strangers to jingle and jig;
When the heavy wool blanket's entirely too thin;
When the sweet little la sie has failed to attract;
When the buxom-made damsel trips by all unseen;
When you sit in cold silence dilating the fact;
That this world is naught else but cold and serene—
"Ain't it awful Mabel?"

TO THE MEMORY OF JUSTUS EAKIN

While we knew him so well, our only regret is,
That we had not known him better—

* * * *

Was sadder message ever sent;
  Was sadder wordings ever said;
Was sadder sentence ever blent,
  Than these words—"Justus Eakin's dead"?

* * * *

No marble shaft need e'er arise
  Upon
Thy sodded mound. No eulogies,
  Anon,
Or e'er, need song to tell thy fame.
Thy features never blushed with shame.
Thy monument's a living flame

OF GOOD DEEDS DONE AND HONORED NAME—

  Yet gone.

No epitaph need e'er be penned,
  Of you;
'Tis writ across the heart of friend
  Who knew
Your sterling qualities—so grand;
Your glad response to each demand,
That helped make this a better land.
Thrice blest is he who clasped that hand
  So true.

The heart that beat for human kind,
  Is stilled;
The flesh that bent to that great mind,
  Is chilled;
The soul, which through its windows shone,
And tuned to Charity's sweet tone,
Is now before its Maker's Throne;
Where souls, akin, who know their own,
  Are thrilled.

THE CANDIDATE

The night before:
All night long, in his downy bed,
The candidate lay dreaming of the hour,
When his avowed rival came and said:
"I gaze in awed amazement at thy power."
E'en though his dreams smacked strong of rarebit more and more;
Loved Fancy gave him all the ear-marks of a conqueror.

The day:
The hours wore on. The fevered form
Is brought once more to wakefulness by her.
Announcing in soft voicings—'fore the storm—
"Thy breakfast, dear, is ready—please concur;
Then to the heat of battle armed truly for the fray,
Haste thee—and bring home to thy loved one victory to-day."

He sallies forth, half trembling yet firm
To meet his trusty (?) henchmen—one and all—
To hear them say that "naught can ever turn"
The tide against him in the heated brawl.
E'en though the "advanced finances" getting lower and lower,
To keep his guns in action—they'll really need some more.

The soothing "green" comes forth and they,
In adamantine phalanx, charge the foe.
From early morn till darkness ends the day,
O'er hill and dale his forces come and go.
And when the battle of the ballots has hushed its treach'rous din,
He waits, with nervous respiration—wondering—who'll win.

The Night:
Old Time moves on—the bulletins are flashed,
Announcing to the public who is who,
He finds his Morpheetic castles smashed,
Not e'en the least foundations, where they grew.
He turns to seek his workers (?) who'd unscrupulously crammed
His head with visions. Gone. Then homeward
—muttering: "Politics be damned."

A CHAT (?) WITH DEATH

Well, Death, my dear old ghoulish one,
How do?
Pray how are all things coming on,
With you?
You know I think it just and right,
To always treat you real polite,
As you may call for me some night,
Before—I'm due.

So, then, if you and I have been,
Good friends,
I might coax you to call again,
Your ends
To consummate; as I, you know,
Might not be quite in shape to go;
Then you would give me time, I'd trow,
To make, amends.

So let me clasp that boney hand,
And say—
They paint you in a most outland-
Ish way,
With hollow skull, and pate so bare;
Sightless orbs, or no orbs there;
Legs all bones, and ribs so "spare,"
And yet, you're gay.

The artist must mistaken be
Of you,
Or else you took him off 'fore he
Was through;
He started on the inside first—
(Perhaps you moved—the artist cursed)
At least, he got you at your worst,
And this, is true.

With sightless orbs! (Ye gods, I hope
He's right)—
How do you judge the proper scope,
At night?
If I thought you could see, asthore,
I'd have no name-plate on my door;
Besides, I'd move the night before
You'd come, in sight.

Now, tell me 'bout the length of time
You've been
A scourge, of course, to every clime
You're in.
Then tell me where you got the scythe
That cuts the bungler and the blithe,
The sad, the gay, the stiff, the lithe—
And most—in sin.

You're not as really bad as some
Will tell;
I know of places where you've come,
Quite well,
To take a member as your prize
Unto a home beyond the skies,
Entreaties caused you leave the ties
Alone—a spell.

We find, again, a few who ask
You come,
So's they can end their earthly task.
Then some,
We note, a time have "cheated you,"

(That is, as far as the reporter knew),
These chaps who "broke the coop and flew"—
To where? Not home.

There's one thing I can't understand
Down here—
So few will meet and shake your hand
With cheer.
We live the same life right along;
Debauch and theft, deceit and song,
Yet know full well we're doing wrong—
That's why, we fear.

If you were just a grafter, how
You'd pile
Your ducats up—and bend and bow
In style.
You'd only have to name your price,
Till 'twould be gobbled in a trice;
You'd never have to ask it twice,
Nor—"wait awhile."

There's one thing I will ask you,
"On the dead."
That's—let me know a week or so
Ahead.
Of course, I'll ask you let me stay
Till I am bent and blind and gray,
Till I, no more, can see my way,
Or find—my bed.

So, with this little chat, I'll say
Good-bye;
Don't strain a point to name the day
When I
Will be a target for your dart.
Just take your time and do your part;
I'll side-step if I see you start,
And that's—no lie.

FARMISH DEALINGS

We've stood and watched his majesty,
When figgerin' in a deal;
How he'll scan each minute detail—
Fear the other feller'll steal.
Then when the thing is finished—
When all mystic points are sprung,
How he'll chuckle so ecstatic
When the other lad is "stung."
It makes no pointed difference
'Bout the sort of deal in toss,
Be it optionin' his coal land,
Or a-swappin' hoss for hoss;
Or a-sellin' of his acres
(To which he's fallen heir),
Or a dick'rin' for a yearlin' calf,
He wants the lion's share.
Or let him bring his chickens,
Or his eggs and butter too,
To trade for needed merchandise
To help his family through.
Your prices for this produce
Are much lower than he thought,
And the prices for your merchandise
Are higher than they ought.
His chickens weighed much heavier
Upon his steel-yard scale.
His eggs so "strictly fresh" you'll find
Are oftimes rather stale—
(A hundred times or more we've seen
Him peddling them around
Within his straw-lined basket,
So's to give a country sound;
Then later on we've found them
To be not the freshest stock
But purchased from old Darby Brown
Just half-way down the block).
His butter which he so reluct-
Antly did bring along,
Was packed along in summer

And just now is nice and strong.
But you finally decide upon
The price you'll pay, and then
Comes the tryin' moment
For the tradin' to begin.
You measure off the dry goods
That he's wantin'—thick or thin—
For each yard that he specifies
He'd like a half thrown in.
Then when you see the scale beam tip,
At best you can—the net—
He wonders why you don't allow
An extra four ounce yet.
And the goods that you are selling him,
Does not exactly gee,
As there's "nothing that's made now-a-days
As good's they used to be."
Thus the dickerin' proceedeth—
His "trade" don't cover all;
So he runs a good-sized book account—
He'll settle " 'long next fall."
Then I watch the wreathes of sunshine
On the merchant's face, about,
When the farmer says—"That's all to-day"—
And packs his plunder out.
Then my mind gives me a picture,
As I watch him on his way,
And I see him at the pearly gates,
Upon that greatest day;
A-fig'rin' with Saint Peter for
The very choicest seat,
With silken-pillowed hassocks
On which to rest his feet,
A-blockin' up the passageway,
When others wanted in,
Though he sees naught but just himself
And his cussed dickerin'.
And then I hear St. Peter say,
"Your dickerin' days are done.
Go down and talk to Lucifer;
He likes your sort of fun;

And when you've stayed three hundred years
We'll let you come back here.
Those little inexpensive tricks
Will cost you rather dear."

CUPID'S QUESTIONS—CUPID'S ANSWERS

"Mollie, may I have a chatter;
Just a little chat with you—
On a confidential matter
Then you tell me what to do?

"Well we know that from our childhood,
We've been friends in weal and woe;
Played at school, and in the wildwood;
Hand in hand to church we'd go.

"All our little childish troubles
We've discussed in confidence,
Played at marbles—blown our bubbles—
Truest friends since life commenced.

"Wa'n't it fine when confidential,
How we'd put dull care to rout?
Now I've troubles, so potential,
And I'll ask you help me out.

"In our childish days, just ended,
Tired, yet happy, from our play;
With our homeward courses wended,
Thoughts of you were done that day.

"And perhaps that on the morrow,
We'd not see each other then,
'Twas not tinged with special sorrow,
As we knew we'd meet again.

"Now I can't guess what's the matter;
Queerest thoughts my mind goes through;

Find myself in constant chatter
With myself—and all of you.

"All day long I think about you;
All night long my dreams the same;
Sirens ask of me to doubt you—
Though you know no other name.

"Birds are singing of you sweetly,
Restless is my sleep at night,
Heart oft-times seems stopped completely.
Lost—when you are from my sight.

"Happy, only, when I'm near you;
The nearer—better satisfied.
In my liking now I fear you—
Fear my former pranks you'll chide.

"Want to put my arms around you;
Press your bosom close to mine;
Kiss you—'Do those things astound you?'
They, to me, are so sublime.

"Now I've told each thought and feeling—
Can you tell me—what's the cause?"
"Now, dear Will, you're so appealing,
I will say it's just because—

"Just because—the woman's reason—
"Just because—she tapped her glove—
Lightly 'gainst his cheek—"the reason—
Just because—like me—in love."

"MY LOST LENORE"

Dedicated to One Who Loved and Lost

Poe, by some delineators,
Has been classed 'mongst dissipators,
Some so blandly say—"delirious,"
When he talked Plutonian shore.

Say his mind was fogged and hazy.
Say he verged well nigh to crazy,
As he sat and penned so truly,
  Of his loved and lost—Lenore.

Picture him in direst tremens—
Holding converse with the demons—
Say, from over stimulation,
  That his brain was racked and sore.
Say a mind with proper fittings
Could not frame such weird emittings,
As exuded in his Raven,
  Of his loved and lost Lenore.

How we hate a base detractor!
How we scorn a malefactor!
How can one well sit in judgment,
  When he's biased to the core?
How can one who's ne'er been thwarted;
Ne'er been crossed since first he started
On the path well planned by Cupid,
  Scoff such thoughts of sweet Lenore?

Well we know; Ah! know sincerely,
That this one was loved so dearly.
Loved to such a pitch whereat he
  Thought of her and thought—no more.
Loved to such acute distraction.
Loved and lost—when chill reaction,
Sent him reeling—not to darkness,
  But to sadness, and—Lenore.

Here, with brain of master-making;
Heart-strings torn and heart abreaking;
His pure soul goes out in sayings,
  That we'd class as, mystic lore.
Stripped of all the pearls once given;
All that made this earth a heaven;
Lurid, lucent thoughts go gushing,
  To his loved and lost Lenore.

Let detractors, low and craven,
Smite. We understand "The Raven."
Know just how the mind goes twaddling,
When it's bruised at every pore.
Love itself's a stimulation.
Blighted love—worst dissipation.
All our sympathy is with you—
We have lost a loved Lenore.

THE FIDGETTY BUYER

I've been on the road for many a day,
And bumped into all sorts of buyers,
The big-hearted fellow, who'll buy and look gay,
The one who will never turn any away,
The grumpy old rooster, who's there with his "nay,"
And the larger bunch of good-natured liars.

I'll stand for the fellow who'll argue his case,
And show me I'm not the whole circus.
I'll "shake" with the one who thinks it no disgrace
To lie 'till he's really black in the face.
I'll pardon the one with the rebating pace,
And the one whose sole aim is to "work" us.

I'll eat with the merchant who runs the hotel,
I'll comment on his wife's knack of cooking (?),
I'll fondle his youngsters (and big ones as well),
That is, in the case where the big ones won't tell,
Where the "big one's" a girl, the acknowledged town belle,
And she strikes me as extra good looking.

I'll stand for the fellow with no word to say,
While I talk wares, prices and profit,
Who, when I am through, will jump into the fray,
And figure the "net" in a different way,
Then whisper ironically, "Nothing to-day,"
In other words, "You go to ————Tophet."

But if there's one man on this globular sphere
Who makes me feel real pugilistic,
'Tis he, when a salesman is drawing near
Who'll "hike" up the stairway or break for the rear,
And just as the train comes you'll see him appear,
Then bid you "Good-bye" so artistic.

I never wish anyone luck the wrong way,
But as this fellow's manner's depressing,
I hope when he 'pears on the great judgment day
At the grand pearly gates, the angel will say,
"I haven't the keys and St. Peter's away,"
I guess this would set him to guessing.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Go ring the bells and fire the guns,
And float the flag at highest mast;
Shoot the rockets—toot the horns,
And live in triumphs of the past.
Let every freeman shout the praise
Of those we know were truly great;
Back in those trying, trustful days—
This day—"the day we celebrate."

Their lives, their sacred honor, and
Their fortunes, all were put at stake;
Not just that they would hold command
Of freedom—but for our own sake —
For our sake was this document,
Designed and signed, and "What can mate
With it?" And let us give our vent
In proud hurrahs and—celebrate.

One hundred, yes, and thirty-three,
Long years have passed, and one and all,
Have heard the sound that set us free
As clanged from Independence Hall
On that fourth day of dear July.
(How well we recollect the date),

So let us sing and pray, and try,
In all right ways, to celebrate.

WHY BOB MISSED THE FAIR

Dedicated to an old school-day friend

Have you been to the fair?
No? On the square?
For heaven's sake! What is the matter?
There was once you'd declare,
That no fair, anywhere,
Could be held without you on the platter.

Why the race couldn't start,
Without you taking part;
And the pumpkins would be a sad yellow;
And the curt little miss,
Would be shy on her kiss—
Pray what brought the change, my old fellow?

And the glibness of tongue,
And the songs you have sung,
Are surely not past the horizon.
Don't Terpischore,
Glide with you in glee?
If she don't 'tis to me so surprisin'.

And really and true—
Those two eyes of sky-blue,
And those "pink-dimpled" cheeks all abeaming—
Did those, too, abscond
To the mystic beyond,
And leave you alone in your dreaming?

'Course your hair, I must say
Has transformed to the gray,
And I notice consider'bly thinner,
But your step is still spry,
And I can't see why,
Even yet, you'd be much less a winner.

What's that? Speak again!
You're the "saddest of men"?
That "dimpled-cheek" lass—you confuse me.
What—married? And—nine?
Why shake Bob, that's fine—
Oh! The cost. Yes I see. Please excuse me.

IN WEST VIRGINIA

Ours is the Little Mountain State,
This West Virginia.
Though not so large—she's truly great,
Is West Virginia.
And those of us, so luck'ly born,
'Longside her fields of "waving corn";
Seem never yet to grow forlorn—
In West Virginia.

So far as area does go,—
In West Virginia;
We've never had a half a show,
In West Virginia;
As our land stands in stacks, about,
And for square miles, we're not so stout,
But big as Texas—leveled out—
This West Virginia.

The land, as we remember first,
In West Virginia;
Of all on earth about the worst,
This West Virginia.
We'd clean the hillside, for the crop;
Then came the rain, with ne'er a stop,
And washed all good soil, at first flop,
From West Virginia.

We lived a long time on the soil,
Of West Virginia;
Before we knew it oozed with oil,
In West Virginia;

Before we knew what treasures laid,
In her dense forests, unsurveyed,
And her coal fields of highest grade—
Dear West Virginia!

In fact, we lived as most folks do,
In West Virginia.
Especially when the country's new,
Like West Virginia.
We'd raise enough from soil and sod,
To sort o' keep us half way shod,
And for the balance—Trust to God—
In West Virginia.

But time went by and folks came in,
To West Virginia;
From Pennsy, and from old Vir-gin',
To West Virginia;
From New York and from O-hi-o,
From commonwealths, both fast and slow,
And brought along the needed dough,—
To West Virginia.

They'd deck our hills, with derricks grand,
In West Virginia.
They'd hit dry holes and "paying sand",
In West Virginia.
They'd strip our land of stately trees,
They'd pipe our gas out as they'd please,
They'd ship our coal across the seas,—
From West Virginia.

But, we got busy, by and by,
In West Virginia.
We learned their trades and took a try,
In West Virginia.
We found we knew the place to drill;
We found the coal beneath the hill,
As well as they, or better still—
In West Virginia.

They called us "West Virginia snakes,"
In West Virginia;
We stood it, just for business sakes,
In West Virginia.
They're gone,—we're here to tell the tale,
Of how the "snakes" have "hit the trail"
And how some sold at public sale—
In West Virginia.

HER CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Up the street with unsteady tread,
(With a thousand and one things in her head),
Speeding along at a furious rate,
(For fear she'll be possibly half hour late),
With a new bank book and a fountain pen,
(As not all the checks are drawn by men),
With an eye for the window dresser's art--
(We stand aghast while we watch the start)—
To do her Christmas shopping.

She scans the situation o'er,
(She's done this many a time before);
Her "field glass" tells her at a glance
The special point for her fixed advance.
Then with an air that we'll call "true blue"—
(Like Napoleon had—first—at Waterloo)
She sounds the call and the fight is on;
(Then she buys her presents—one by one)—
Out a-Christmas shopping.

She bought an ermine muff for Sue,
(And the other part of the set for Lou)
To wear when stormy is the weather;
(The two girls ne'er go out together).
For Bill she bought a bat and ball;
(First thing he asked "if that was all").
Baby got a go-cart new—
(For dad to push, as he loves to do,
When mamma goes a shopping).

She bought a pipe for "grand-papa"—
(On her husband's side)—For grand-mamma
(This grandpa's wife) she bought a bonnet,
(With some of *her* last year's trimming on it).
For grand-papa (her side of the tree),
Enough old wine for a two months' spree;
New clothes, new pipe and tobacco jar,
(And really considered a motor car)—
When on her Christmas shopping.

Her own mamma of course got all
She needed to run her till late next fall;
(This lady, I nearly forgot to tell,
Assisted in buying, and did it well).
Then on came presents for friends galore,
(Some she'd not seen for a year or more)
She'd "have to exchange"—she'd plainly see
"A fair exchange is no robbery"—
When she went out a-shopping.

She bought herself a sealskin coat,
(With a high storm collar up 'round her throat),
A beaver hat with "rooms to let,"
(With ostrich plumes and a huge egret),
Fancy suedes and silken hose—
Done. Then off her home she goes.
For Dad (whom she quotes as a generous fellow)
She bought a family umber-ella,
And a quart of brandy, aged and fine—
(That she'll use in the cooking at Christmas time)
This finished up her shopping.

'TIS CHRISTMAS MORN

Ye bells, peal out with joyous peal!
To-day a King to us is given,
To strip from Death his envied seal;
To ope to us the way to Heaven.
Peal, till your voices pierce the glen;
Peal, till all creatures hear again,
His "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Ye Christians, now arise—and sing
  Glad "Hallelujahs"—all aglow,
Sweet myrrh and incense ye will bring,
  Not to the lowly manger—no—
But to the Tabernacle, where
Ye know He's always present. There
Ye'll give your hearts to Him in prayer.

Ye, God's anointed, tell again
  The story of the Stable-born,
Who came to give His life for men.
  Tell us of that first Christmas morn.
And those dear shepherds—tell of them;
How, guided by that Heavenly Gem,
Found the sweet Babe of Bethlehem.

Ye choirs, whom God has blessed with tone,
  Sing as ye ne'er have sung before;
Sing, till your voices reach the Throne,
  And echo back in angel lore.
Let hallowed "Glorias" resound,
Entwined with blest "Adestes" 'round
This Day of Days—when joy's profound.

THE NIGGER

No wonder the true son of Ham—so full of Negro pride,
Will show acute displeasure when "nigger" is applied
To him. Because no law on earth can give the legal right
For this mean appellation to the Black, no more than White;
When he or they stand out for all that's honest, just and fair—
What if his skin be black as night and woolly be his hair?

To be a "nigger," one must be the vacillating kind--
Who is one thing here—another there—as changing as the wind;

Agrees with you in politics; and always "loved your Creed;"
Who speaks about "blue-blooded" folks—rich, perhaps, through greed;
When, if his vetebra was not so prone to bend and wince,
His blood, we'd guess, superior—a generation since.

Again, you find the "nigger"—though his skin be white as snow—
Who courts for tips when you have paid the price for thus and so,
And when you fail to tip him, when he has served you first,
He waits his opportunity to hand you out the worst.
You find this class around cafes—barber shops—hotels—
From the lad who spreads the lather, to the one who answers bells.
Now when you've grown so niggardly, when dubbed as "nigger," smile
As you're named indeed, correctly—if it ruffles, change your style.

We have the black skinned "nigger"—aye, have him by the score,
Who has his palm turned upward at the end of every chore,
E'en though he's paid for doing same he wants a tip from you;
Then hangs around as if he thought it just and rightly due.
And, strange to state, proprietors allow—and some approve
Of this debauching system—when they see its every move.

So we'll suggest, before another generation's born;
Before the name "American" is held to shame and scorn;

Before we're all dependents—stop the thing right here;
Relegate the "nigger" to his soon-forgotten bier,
So that future sons and daughters may never hear the name;
Let's have them think America ne'er knew of such a shame.

SHE CHANGED HER OPINION—SOME

She used to scoff at leap year,
When the other girls would rave—
That is, those girls who see much pleasure in it.
She was, in fact, quite pretty,
And some beau (I'd say a knave)
Had told her—and it spoiled her from that minute.

Whene'er they'd give a party,
And the girls would be the beaux
(According to the leap year's happy ruling),
She'd say it didn't suit her
For a minute to transpose
Or deviate from her most rigid schooling.

She'd say, "These horrid leap years
Should be, oh, so far apart;
At best the year when *ten* is the divisor."
The calendar, she'd reckon,
Could be made as chic and smart
If some one would effect a compromiser.

To hear her tell the story,
She'd never been in love;
Ne'er had been caressed—how strange the spelling!
If any boy would dare, or
In the leastwise try to prove
His love, oh, my, the story she'd be telling.

She ne'er believed in hay rides,
Nor settees built for two;

She never cooed when lights burned low and dimly;
She'd never strolled in pastures
  Where the four-leaf clover grew,
Nor basked in silvery moonbeams—this Miss Primly.

Let's see—just now she's forty—
  Her opinion's changed a bit;
She'll listen, too, while others will advise her.
Still single. Now of leap years
  She considers they are *it*.
But they should be years with *one* as the devisor.

THE PASSING OF RUBE

We stood for hours for the parade;
  Then went to see the show;
Just precisely like we've done
  Since long, long years ago.

We saw the gilded carriages,
  With animals inside;
The camels and the elephants,
  And pretty girls—astride.

But as they failed to bring the clown,
  We spent our eighty cents;
But no enjoyment like the days,
  We crawled beneath the tents.

Another thing not like the old—
  We missed friend Joshua,
Who always played the leading role
  On every circus day.

No Aunt Samantha, Uncle Zeke,
  Their children, Hi and Bill,
Lucy, Henry, Aleck, Eph,
  With Susan, Maud and Lil.

And all their widowed neighbors' kids,
  Perhaps the widow, too,
All decked out in their Sunday best,
  Of old gold, red and blue.

In fact, we sat in 'mongst a bunch,
  Right fresh from off the farm;
Dad was trigged in "latest cut,"
  And dang the fly on "marm."

Alexander—Joshua—
  And Hiram looked like swells,
All stopping at the Stamm, the Windsor,
  And McLure hotels.

Susan, Maud and Lillian—well,
  No better dressed in town,
With the latest in directoires,
  And peach baskets, upside down.

So since we have a circus day,
  Without friend Rube about,
To us the heavy character—
  We cut the circus out.

THE OLD TIME DRUMMER'S GONE

We're out along the line again;
  Just sort o' looking o'er
The peaceful situation—
  We can call it nothing more;
As everything is calm and still;
  The folks seem tired and wan;
No one to make a fuss or noise—
  The old time drummer's gone.

We sit, and sadly reminisce,
  Back fifteen years ago;
We see him on his reg'lar rounds
  In rain or shine or snow.

We see the sunshine in his face;
  We know he's stories new;
We sit and wait to hear them—when
  His order-taking's through.

A number one philosopher—
  This grand old knight of yore;
Was right at home on Broadway
  Or out at the country store.
At annual revivals he
  Could lead the hymns that won,
Or "call the figgers" for the dance
  When meeting time was done.

His friends all knew his brands so well,
  And bought them with a vim—
Incidentally adding, they
  Were "helpin' biz for Jim"—
He'd champions in every town,
  All waiting for his trip;
The men seemed pleased, girls all smiled,
  The kids would lug his grip.

He knew the boys just well enough
  To call them "Tom" or "Joe";
Then 'sides the boys he ne'er forgot
  To chat with Nell and Flo.
Or make a date with Sue or Bess
  (Not certain just which one.)
If Sue was out, why Bess would do—
  The old time drummer's gone.

The merchant always knew the day
  He'd hit his special town;
He'd always dig an order up—
  He wouldn't throw him down.
He knew the wants of all his trade,
  And sent just what he knew
Would all be sold about the time
  His reg'lar trip was due.

His conversation took him o'er
A line so versatile;
He talked on hay with Cyrus,
And optioned coal with Bill;
He chatted health with Dr. Jenks;
With Dan, he drilled for oil;
He'd help to ballast up the track
With Foreman Denny Boyle.

He always knew the suffragette;
Agreed (?) on woman's rights;
He bought all church-fair tickets,
And took in all cock-fights;
He'd prohibish with Jennie Smith;
Drink with her husband, John;
He knew the world in every phase—
This dear old chap that's gone.

THE CHRISTMAS SMILE

While we rack our brains for matter for a little
Yuletide chatter,
What can we pen of more pleasant than the happy
Christmas smile,
Which just now adorns all faces, banishing all care-
worn traces?
And it hap'ly dawns upon us—"Why not wear it
all the while?"

Always comes just when expected, and we all be-
come infected;
Yet we never fret nor worry if it stays a good
long while.
Never send for a physician—sort o' like the new
condition;
As we all try hard to keep it—this light-hearted
Christmas smile.

See the Christmas shoppers gather, though incle-
ment be the weather;

All exchanging happy glances as they quickly spend
their pile,
For which papa worked untiring, half a-fret and
all perspiring;
Even he, receiving tokens, wears the ever Christ-
mas smile.

See dear grandpa in the toy room, which we'd
thought a girl and boy room,
With all aches and pains discarded—dressed in
latest Yuletide style.
And dear grandma, far from fretful, reminiscing,
ne'er forgetful
Of her days of dolls and Santas—all decked out in
Christmas smile.

Then see ma, not once a kickin', roasting turkey or
spring chicken;
Baking cookies, pies and doughnuts (far exceeding
her first trial),
Which she piles upon our dishes, with the season's
choicest wishes,
And her blessings—strictly mother's, all aglow with
Christmas smile.

'Course the kids, why 'tis their season, and we all
well know the reason
Why their faces beam so brightly, rigged anew from
shoes to tile;
Gifts from dad and aunt and brother, uncle, cousin,
teacher, mother,
And their stomachs full to bursting—their's is
Nature's Christmas smile.

See the soldier or the sailor; see the farmer or the
tailor;
See the postman or policeman—from Berlin or
Erin's Isle;
See all callings—men and women—plainly stamped
"We've naught agin' 'em;
Let the dead past hide its dead ones, we possess the
Christmas smile."

So we say while we possess it, "It is ours to keep,
God bless it!"
And we'll try to change its season from two weeks
to all the while;
Course we'll have to treat it grandly, never harsh,
nor mean, nor blandly;
Let's all try to keep it longest—selfish 'bout this
Christmas smile.

TO THE LITERARY CRITICS

When sages were sages 'way back in the ages,
When sayings of sages took root;
They worked not for wages, but penned away pages
Of thoughts for all ages to suit.
'Twas like one prospecting, with aim ne'er deflecting
As naught ever thwarted their goal;
Which stood out so bold like, aye, far from the
cold like—
Their virgin thoughts went as a whole.
And what was said by them, we'll never deny them,
As their emanations were first—
Whose best was first quoted, when dead—'twill be
noted—
But yet while alive 'twas their worst.
But now 'tis perplexing—we must confess—vexing,
While shaping our thoughts into rhyme,
For fear this same "shaping" may savor of apeing,
Then torn by the critics of time,
Who smile in derision at each cold incision,
They make with their vitriolic lance,
Which bares our collection of thoughts to inspection,
Exposing all dross at a glance.
We're held to the limelight because we don't rhyme
right,
Our knowledge of meter is short—
Our brilliant (?) narrations are bent with quotations,

Our thoughts are a paraphrased sort.
We're "pronouncedly erratic," "so very aquatic"—
We lack the "terse treatment of topics."
We "ooze in the frigid," "relax in the rigid,"
And freeze when we "pen of the tropics."
But we'll say to the critic—though so analytic—
If Homer and Virgil we quote,
Or pilfer from Milton—our pen to the hilt in—
Or from Goldsmith or Shakespeare we note,
Or copy from Irving, and we, yet unswerving,
Tear swatches from Bryant and Moore,
Or rent Burns asunder, or steal Byron's thunder,
Or revel in Tennyson's lore,
Or lasso dear Hemans, with Riley or Clemens,
Or hold Dr. Johnson at bay,
Or kidnap poor Shelley, or squash Scott to jelly,
Or shanghai George Hobart or Day—
We bow not before you, nor humbly implore you
To forgive any transgression made,
As we simply have said it—because we have read it,
Who'd know what *we* knew if unsaid?
But we'll thank these dear sages, who mellowed the pages
Of copyright lore on our shelves—
We've bought and we've paid for, the books we have prayed for,
And will use them to suit our dear selves.

EASTER DAY

Ye bells, whose every tone is blest,
By consecrated hands, now ring:
Announce to north, south, east and west,
The advent of a risen King.

Ye told us on the Christmas Morn,
Aye, told us in such joyous breath—
"To all mankind is this day born
A King to break the seals of Death."

How very true your prophesy!
The heavy stone is rolled away;
As now in all triumphancy—
"Christ is risen!"—Easter Day!

The sombre hues we put aside,
And don the living ones again:
Then sing with Him this Easter-tide—
"Sweet peace on earth—good will to men."

THE HARDLUCK SALESMAN'S SOLILOQUY

In giving to the public the following effusion, which the author sees fit to dub "The Hardluck Salesman's Soliloquy," he wishes it distinctly understood that he is in no way whatever trying to make his bow to the poetic world, and, therefore, asks that the literary critic kindly "brush by," as it is strictly his—his personal observings, jotted down in rythm good enough for himself, of the "sleep-late" traveling man, who retires when all the hard working brothers have "been in the hay" for three or four hours—who leaves a "last call for breakfast" call, puts in an hour or so, a la millionaire, at mincing the bill, picks his teeth and puffs up a bang up imitation five cent cigar for another hour or so—finds it impossible to do anything now before noon, and whose continued wail is "never saw business so rotten"—when the happy solution to all is—start early and "go after them."

Some people, I think, are really born
When the star of good luck reigns supreme,
And, some come to life in the first quarter's morn,
And some in the last, it would seem.
But I must have come when the quarter was dark,
(In "total eclipse," I would say),
For truly this old world has played me a "mark,"
At least—to the present—to-day.

When I'd bet on the horse that had always run first,
He would run a good seventh, that race.
When I'd bet on the best—'twould sure be the worst
Who would win the election with grace.
The team—for sure winners—which I'd always pick
When the season of base-ball begun,
Would start like the rocket—come down like the stick
Before half the season had run.
The street car I wanted 's just passing from sight,
The ferry-boat's half 'crost the stream,
The last train is gone, which went my way that night,
The hotels are full—all adream.
The fellow who pledged me his opening bill,
Has just placed the order with Joe.
And the house just informs—my friend at Brown's Mill
Has made an assignment or so.
Then Mollie—my sweet, blue-eyed lass from Dunfee,
Whom I'd loved since my loving began,
Who sported the highest priced presents from me,
Ran off with a specialty man.
The sure things I've bit on, and the sure things I've missed,
Are equal in number I know.
The dead stock certificates make quite a list,
One hundred and ninety or so.
The cheap railroad fares have all been recalled,
The day on which I struck the road.
They've cut down the excess, on all baggage hauled
Expressmen charge much more per load.
I'm last through the turnstile—I catch the last car—
I get the rear seat in the train,
The man just ahead has his window up far—
I get all the cinders and rain.
And I think—as I sit there—how Hardluck and I

Have traveled o'er plain and through gap,
And I picture the last car for Heaven pass by,
And I see myself hung on a strap.
In fancy, I see myself crossing the Styx—
I'm last in the line at the gate—
They all pass inside—but to me is said "Nix,"
And Peter says—"Sorry"—"Your late."
We talk through the wicket (he in, and I out),
He tells me he wishes me well—
That Heaven is full, but I'll find, without doubt,
A few "good rooms" left down in—well —
I grow philosophic, and I say as I go—
"It's Lucifer Satan for mine"—
I find lots of other folks going below,
But for once—I am first in the line.
I rap for admission—the gate swings awide,
And Lucifer greets me with joy.
He gives me his "right" and says, "Stand by my side—
Your service 's been yeoman, old boy."
Each guest in reluctance sinks down in his vat,
The gates close forever behind,
He tells me to hang up my coat and my hat,
Then—carefully—pulls down the blind—
And then I am sure he will say with much praise,
"You've performed all my missions so well,
I will give you for all of Eternity's days
The last vault that's left here—in h—l."

CHRISTMAS PHILOSOPHY

Hear the jingling of the bells,
  Those ever welcome bells;
As they're carried by the reindeer
  Over frosted hills and dells,
All guided by the driver
  With his hair and beard so white;
Who'll slip down the good child's chimney
  In the wee sma' hours of night;
Who will leave his gifts of dolls and sleds,
  Of candies, jams and jells—

Then jogs on his way a chanting
To the music of the bells.

The boys and girls whom Santa loves
Must early go to bed,
And make their little wishes known
Upon their knees, 'tis said.
Then be careful in the asking
To be modest in your claim,
As our dear old Saint Nicholas
Wants to treat you all the same.
If, perchance, he leaves a dollie
When you'd asked a Teddy Bear,
Don't show the least displeasure,
As the donor meant it fair.

If your little neighbor boys and girls,
Got nicer presents far,
Than the ones which fell to your lot,
Don't let this your pleasure mar;
But, be truly philosophic,
And prize them e'er so high,
They have their day, and you'll have yours,
If you will only try.
E'en though none can pierce the future
And disclose what it foretells—
Just march along in quickstep
To the jingle of the bells.

For dear children Christmas wishings
Are symbolic of this life,
As our chief desires so often
Are quite shattered in the strife.
Then we take the best that's left us,
And be happy as we can;
Try to carry our own burden
And assist our fellow-man.
'Till we find we are contented,
With our candies, jams and jells,
And learn to chant like Santa
To the jingle of the bells.

TO THE NATURAL BRIDGE OF VIRGINIA

We stand and gaze in perfect awe and wonder
whom you be;
Intuitively doff our hats in reverence to thee;
As in your green clad royal robes—enigma-like to
men—
You stand erect, quite circumspect—mute monarch
of the glen.

We of the three score years and ten with brain
finitely made;
Make humble intercessions through your giant
ghost-like shade,
Of you though so inanimate and void of joys and
tears,
Please tell the tale of your lone vale and give your
age in years.

Pray tell us with what ease the Great Designer
drew the plans;
Arranged the proud abutments, well beneath receding sands,
Then tell us how that noble arch was set fore'er to
stay,
E'en 'till the land and sea and sand shall all have
passed away.

Then tell us of those early days when this old earth
was new;
When wild upheavals mountains made, and sent
the valleys through;
When blazing craters served to light the heavens
far and wide;
When man first came, the land to claim, and with
you to abide.

You've seen the builder of the mound and arrow-
maker, too;

You've sheltered them from storm and sun—each
so alike to you;
The Mastodon and Mammoth each have gamboled
'neath your form;
Or laid abreast your massive crest, when you were
young and warm.

The mountain lion, wolf, and deer in legions
crossed your way;
Here grizzly and the panther oft have met in fierce
array.
We would not ask you tell the times you've wit-
nessed scenes of gore,
Or how, for power, the strong devour the weaker
o'er and o'er.

Then tell us how the torrent roared adown thy
peaceful glen,
When Deluge cleansed the Earth of sin, e'en
though renewed again;
When quadruped and biped clung in death-grasp to
thy breast;
Describe the strife—their fight for life—their wail
—their last request.

We ask again how old you were when Moses cleft
the sea,
And led his chosen ones across from shackles to be
free?
And who designed the pyramids—withstanding
Time and Storm?
Who of mankind with master-mind gave to the
Sphinx her form?

Then tell us all of Pluto, Jove, Minerva and dear
Ceres,
Of Jupiter and Bacchus—back, to you, a few short
years.
And notes hieroglyphical in catacomb and tomb,
Of early Rome, the Pagan home, to us enwrapped
in gloom.

Then tell us how the Light appeared two thousand years ago;
How Pagan gods and idols fell before a swordless foe;
And now please grant us each request—you ancient cloistered seer;
Don't style a task of what we ask—we listen—make it clear.

Ye children of the latter day—and restless, doubting brain;
My lips since I first came were sealed ne'er to be ope'd again;
And should I now but condescend to tell my tale to men,
Why human kind, of skeptic mind, would merely doubt again.

REFLECTIONS ON WALNUT GROVE CEMETERY

We plod along Ohio's bank—where oft we've plod before;
We wend our course to westward, from her busy, bustling shore;
We scale a little rugged mound, shaped by the Hand above;
We're in a "City of the Dead" well known as Walnut Grove.

Near Martins Ferry's northmost line, where industries prevail;
Where inter-urban cars and trains go up and down the vale;
Where busy men and women all go briskly to and fro;
We try in all our might to live—a hundred years ago.

Our bland imagination turns the cruel hands of Time

Back to the days when these lone dead were in
their buoyant prime.
We see them braving dangers for the ones they truly
love,
We're with them in the times far antedating
Walnut Grove.

We see the log house—daubed with clay; we see its
puncheon floor;
We see the trusty rifle hanging just above the
door;
We see the parents and the children, 'fore the
backlogs glow,
With ear e'er keen, for dangers lurked—a hun-
dred years ago.

We see the men and women battling with a forest
new;
We see the angered savage skulking all the
country through;
We see him fighting for his lands, endeavoring to
prove
The land was his—to those whose dust repose in
Walnut Grove.

And now we set the hands aright—these foes are
'neath the sod;
Their souls are where no strife is known—be-
fore the throne of God.
The fight is o'er, all danger past, in peace we come
and go—
With little thanks for those who fought— a
hundred years ago.

Near Ebenezer Zane's stone slab, that hides his
sunken mound;
We pen to rhyme these simple lines, in reverence
profound—
Profound that in the fact could we but only let
him know—
He blazed the way for us to-day—a hundred
years ago.

You Millers, Martins, Wests and Woods, companions of the Zanes;
Aye very little now we reck of all your cares and pains;
Forgotten are your wakeful nights—forgotten is your love;
Forgotten and unhonored, you who sleep in Walnut Grove.

They talk of heroes of the sword upon the land and sea,
Who merely did their duty in the bravest of degree;
But to our minds they no wise will compare with these who'd trow
To face the danger like they did—one hundred years ago.

Then in return for all they gave—they get a crumbling wall;
The brier and the bramble-bush to decorate their pall;
The locust to chant requiems, when evening breezes blow,
So much for sacrifices made—a hundred years ago.

Shame on you, sons and daughters of the envied "Buckeye State",
Within your cherished confines—at your earliest eastern gate—
Lie all that now is mortal of the first to face the foe,
And claim the land for the white man—one hundred years ago.

THE EDITRESS

The editress sat in her sanctum,
Her "sanctum-sanctorum" at that;
Her form of the lamp-postish make-up
(I don't think she ever was fat).

When standing erect I would venture
  She'd give the six-foot mark a rub;
At least I saw this much from under
  A hat like an inverted tub.
Her poise was the ultra-commanding;
  Each mandate was right to the point;
'Twas plainest of plain understanding
  That she was the boss of the joint.

The poet (?) (I'm it) now approaches;
  He takes a peep under the hat
That sits with most perfect precision
  In peaceful repose on a rat.
He asks in the mellowest couchings
  If she is the editor, please—
"You'll speak in the feminine gender,
  When approaching such portals as these,
You'll furthermore note I'm the critic,
  Of manuscripts worthless and rare."
Then she sits in a pose analytic,
  And scans with a merciless air.

The while she's perusing his effort
  The poet is taking a look,
And figuring out just how long it
  Will be till she says, "Get the hook."
He watches the knit in the eye-brows;
  Espies the strong twitch in the lash,
Then says to himself, "My dear girlie,
  You'll surely be there with the smash."
He sees the vitriolic expression;
  Observes the jaw writhe as in pain;
Then he thinks, "Well, I've got her a guessin'.
  She's puzzled—I see it so plain"—

She turns and, from over her glasses
  She gives him a look, with a sting—
"Your 'poem,'" she says, "is a wonder;
  A sort of diversified thing.
I note you're familiar with Horace;
  You've paraphrased Homer a bit;

You've turned Byron sidewise for pathos;
  You've connoisseured Hobart for wit;
You've stolen from Shakespeare the thunder
  To bring 'bout dramatical tone;
I'd pronounce you a typical wonder,
  That is, if the 'stuff' was your own."

By this time the "poet" was hunting
  The exit from in to without;
Trying to cheer himself thinking—
  "Milady, I'd guess, in a pout."
But e'en though his glance grew beseeching,
  With smiles sandwiched rightly between;
The editress turned her attention
  To the lads on a lino machine.
So the "poet" escaped from her portals,
  With manuscript rated so low;
A-murmuring sadly, "Some mortals
  Need not to be groomed for—below."

SANTA IS COMING

Listen, we just got a wireless from Santy;
  With sledges and reindeer he's driving this way,
With presents for children and parents and auntie,
  He'll arrive after midnight, the twenty-fifth day.

Then down through the chimney or in through the transom,
  Or up through the cellar-way—matters not which—
This dear old Saint Nicholas—so jolly and handsome—
  Dispensing his gifts to the poor and the rich.

He's loaded with Teddy-bears, bob-sleds and candy;
  Skates and warm leggings and wagons and toys;
Autos and picture-books—everything dandy—
  To be given to only the good girls and boys.

The boys or the girls who've been saucy to mother,
Or disobeyed papa or teacher, will find
That Santy with them will have nothing to bother;
In fact he's left all of their presents behind.

But to the good boys and girls he'll be grateful,
And pass round his presents with lavishing hand;
Candies and doughnuts and pies by the plateful—
In fact, everything of which he has command.

Of course he will ask of you not to be greedy,
And not request more than he really can spare,
For he has to be good to the poor and the needy,
As just when he comes do these folks get their share.

So Christmas Eve when bed-time is in season,
Kiss both your papa and mamma good-night;
Kneel and ask Santa for all things in reason;
He'll grant your request and be gone 'fore daylight.

If in the dark he has left you a present,
Perhaps he'd intended for next door below,
And left there the one you requested—be pleasant—
He might come back New Year's and change them—you know.

LOVE, COURTSHIP AND HONEYMOON

(In a Nutshell.)

Courtship's a peculiar stunt (peculiar stunts, I mean),
When both the leading characters are just the proper green.
It usu'ly takes all your nerve to put the question right
So's she—the leading lady in the case—may "Yes" it quite.

Then, heavens, how you quiver when you tackle her mamma;
But the real situation is the way you hit pap-ah.
Now when these cold formalities are consummated, and
You slip the ring that binds them on her "little dimpled hand";
Then in return you get a kiss, the sweetest one as yet—
You feel—"well, I can travel some, with handicaps to let."
Now add a few short tete-a-tetes—the wedding day's announced—
The bride prepares her trousseau with her gowns entrained and flounced.
Then you consult your tailor and your haberdasher, too;
Rig yourself from head to heel in everything brand new;
Appear before the altar looking bad, but at your best;
You answer in affirmative—his reverence does the rest.
Next comes the wedding breakfast (served often, afternoon).
Then 'midst a shower of rice you're on your "eastern honeymoon."
And after "Tenth December" you will be "At Home"—to stay—
When if the truth was known you were but four short days away.

"AUTUMN."

We've often stopped and wondered,
Why those long-haired chaps of yore,
Penned so mighty sadly—
"When the Summer days are o'er"—

And of "The melancholy days
Are come"—et-cet-e-ra;

In fact, each rhymed expression
Would transform a lad to gray.

We'd ne'er guess why they didn't cheer
The change from green to brown;
So they could go a-nutting
In the wood so close to town.

Or yank their double-barreled down,
With dog to hit the trail,
And come back home 'fore nightfall
With a bag of squirrel and quail.

Or think how short the time would be
When sleighing would be great;
Or how they'd fight with snow balls,
And the ice was right to skate.

And a hundred other pastimes,
When the frost had come to stay—
But I understand their feelings now,
On a chill November day.

When your summer clothes are clammy,
And the winter ones not due;
(As the Indian Summer season
Is just off a week or two).

'Tis then we know the reason
For the lines so sadly said;
The coal man sells his wares for cash;
His credit's short on bread.

The transportation's all by hack,
And high—as goodness knows;
He's wondering where on earth he'll find
A clime to suit his clothes.

WHAT'S THE USE

The *real* poet's chief ambition
Seems the betterment of man's condition;
  Finds the flaws within his nature,
  Then deals out his maxims wise.
Showing by each verse and letter,
Just how man may grow much better;
  Sings to him so like the mother
  Sits and sings her lullabys.

Shows his faults in colors plainly;
Talks about his morals mainly;
  Scathes the cursed tongue of Gossip—
  Teaching Charity instead;
Doles out proverbs, pure and saintly;
Handling them in manner daint'ly;
  All of which would make man better,
  If he fix them in his head.

Tells him not to shirk his labor;
Tells him how to love his neighbor;
  Mentions, in the confidential
  'Bout upright and honest ways;
Treats on subjects elevating;
Takes a turn elaborating
  On the vices each could throttle,
  That would bring on endless praise.

Treats intemp'rance as an evil
Fostered by the very devil.
  Paints the poor misguided toper
  Toppling on the very brink
Of the grave he's early heir to;
To the hell he's sprung the snare to;
  All of which is true as gospel
  If he'd only stop to think.

Then how ultra-wise he waxes;
How his brain with thoughts he taxes
  When he hits the philosophic

Doctrine of the Golden Rule.
How his argument's far-reaching
'Bout Divineness of its teaching;
Winding up by straightly saying—
"Ne'er too old for Sunday school."

So, when we of jingling diction
Note those maxims held as fiction,
We propose to never worry
'Bout the betterment of man;
Just will add—'thout being fearful—
"If you can't be good, be careful."
This is all the dope we hand you;
Fix the dose to suit your plan.

"DAVIS"—"ELKINS"

Stephen B. to Tucker went,
And laid out the town of "Davis";
In honor of his law parent
With not one selfish thought (Lord save us!)
And then forthwith to Henry G.,
To tell the "Grand old man" about it;
The father-in-law responds—"I see,
My name could not well live without it."
Then straight-way he, to old Randolph,
Wherein he found much land so level;
Whereat he mapped a new town off,
And named it "Elkins"—(beats the devil).
Then as railroads came Randolph-way,
He saw they pointed—this direction—
All grandly joining—(strange to say)
With "Elkins" as their intersection.
Then Beverly, the county seat,
(With its heavy, mossy cover)
In election met defeat
Handing all the records over
To this "mushroom town" (so claimed
By the gents with ambe. whiskers).
But instead it should be named
The Town-of-not-afraid-to-riskers.

Roomy streets and avenues,
A church for each denomination;
Irish, German, Yankees, Jews—
Make up its thrifty population.
Good hotels and country seats,
Of men with millions as their backin'.
Hospitals with gorgeous suites,
Policemen never beat for trackin'.
Well dressed stores (and ditto clerks)
Wholesale, just as well as retail.
Bankers with the latest works
Down to the minutest detail.
Just to think—a decade since—
What it's now, and what it was then;
We can state, with confidence,
That 'twill ne'er be dubbed a "has been."
To note the way this town has grown;
We'd ne'er predict its destination.
For wishes well we'll say our own
Is that some day she'll lead the nation.
"Davis," on the other hand,
Has done just as friend Steve expected.
Her timber stripped from off the land
Gives a picture—quite dejected.
So Stephen, of the suavish say—
For fear of having Hen's displeasure
Proposed the town of "Gassaway";
And threw in "Henry" as good measure.
But "Elkins" will be "Elkins" gay,
Improving well, with each to-morrow;
While "Davis," "Henry," "Gassaway,"
Will be as "Sodom and Gomorroh."
If Steve would do the gracious act—
(Again ejaculate—"Lord save us!")
"Davis" would "Elkins" be, intact,
And "Elkins" would be known as "Davis."

FREE AMERICA

When we stop and reflect on the heritage—ours—
That God-ordained heritage—Freedom;
And how it was won from the strongest of powers,
We laud those who hailed it as Freedom.
Each heart throb goes out to that undaunted horde,
Who poured their brave blood on the merciless sword
On Bunker Hill's crest and at Brandywine's ford,
While blazing the pathway to Freedom.

The same blood that coursed in that gallant band's veins
While fighting for Future and Freedom,
Has leaped to the stirrups—took charge of the reins
At the least intimation 'gainst Freedom.
And woe to the power whose ambition grew
As to show disrespect to the Red, White and Blue,
For it interested many, not only a few;
As we're all stamped indelibly—"Freedom."

The copyright's "given in trust" for all time,
To the sons of the fathers of Freedom;
We chant it prosaic'ly—sing it in rhyme;
No disordant notes sound in Freedom.
Though the chorus is large—we sing with one tongue—
The balm of the aged—the joy of the young.
Was e'er sweeter melody chanted or sung
Than dear Brother Jonathan's "Freedom"?

And since we are all bound in one strong brotherhood—
The legitimate offspring of Freedom—
Why not always care for each other's good?
For you and for me is this Freedom.
So we ask:—"Why this battle 'tween power and brawn?"
We ask and want answered, "What brought it all on?"

"Live and let live"—is this loved proverb gone
From the blood-christened nation of Freedom?

In this God-blessed land, with resources so rare,
Nursed on the breast-milk of Freedom,
Where traitor or tyrant can't live—for the air
Is only intended for Freedom—
We quiz:—"In this glorious land of the Free,
Has might been allowed to have reached the degree
Of rule you or ruin"—which e'er it may be—
And this in the Garden of Freedom?

With sweet admiration, we'll e'er sing the praise
Of the soldiers who gave us our Freedom,
When their steel was well matched, and they reckoned would days
Revert them to shackles or Freedom.
But how can we feel in this cowardly fight,
With power entrenched behind ramparts of might,
While before them, unarmed, stand the legions of right
Appealing to heaven for Freedom?

Something is wrong! Can't some diagnose
This plague undermining our Freedom?
Then deal out the remedy in proper dose,
And nurse back to Nature dear Freedom?
Some heroic treatment is needed to give
The true Nature tintings to "Live and let live."
Why not meet in common—forget and forgive,
And hoist high the banner of Freedom?

THAT AWFUL, AWFUL "NO."

I loved her well, but not alike
The storied cavalier;
I did not say "you be my wife,
Or mourn beside my bier."

I did not woo the dark abyss,
  Nor tell her how I'd throw
Myself adown its weird recess
  If she should answer "No."

But even though I'd not do this,
  I loved her oh, so well;
I will confess, I pictured life
  Without her as a hell.

My thoughts by day, my dreams by night,
  Were "she" and "she" alone;
My love would far surpass the heat
  Within the torrid zone.

Being frank, I looked her fair—
  Ly, squarely in the eye—
Told her all—yet added that
  I could not tell just why.

She never said she cared for me,
  Nor showed the slightest sign;
Oftimes I've wondered what sh'd say
  If I would say "Be mine."

Although she always seemed quite pleased
  When I would ask to call;
Enjoyed with me the theatre;
  We never missed a ball.

She'd let me stay till nearly twelve
  Before she'd start to yawn—
How oft I've heard her papa ask
  If that "young man has gone."

Then summarizing all these things,
  I dropped a line one day,
And asked her if she'd marry me—
  I wondered what she'd say.

She answered on a postal card;
  It started—"My dear beau,

I like to be your sweetheart—
  But your husband? Never, no."

Then how my spirits went depressed;
  My heart beat faint and slow;
My appetite went all awry—
  All for that cussed "No."

My mind, once panoramic like,
  Was now a blank, I'll trow;
My days were sad, my nights were hell —
  Because she answered "No."

I couldn't speak in civil tones;
  I seemed in Hoodooville;
This world was stripped of all its charms—
  Oh, what a bitter pill!

I courted Death and asked that he
  Relieve me—once for all—
'Twas August now and well I knew
  I'd ne'er survive the Fall.

My friends would note the change in me,
  And ask me what was wrong—
They'd try to cheer me every way—
  By counsel—laugh and song.

At last—Hurrah! My appetite
  Seemed coming once again;
My mind improved, my strength returned;
  A man once more, 'mongst men.

Now this was in my school-day time—
  Some fifteen years ago—
To-day I met that girl again
  Who said that cruel "No."

The form, once trim and quite petite,
  Is now so big and round,
I'm safe to say—on any scale—
  She'd weigh three hundred pound.

Her golden hair is half and half—
  Half brown, the other gray—
The gray peeks out beyond the brown,
  In such a forceful way.

Her teeth were bought from Doctor Rowes,
  And fit perhaps—'long 'go;
I couldn't help but say—how glad
  You sent that answer—"No."

THE DAY WE WEAR THE GREEN

Thanksgiving day and Labor day we celebrate with glee,
And on the Fourth day of July rejoice that we are free;
Washington's and Lincoln's days we honor so serene,
But the seventeenth of March is ours—for "The wearin' of the green."

We start in early morning, when the sun's dispelled the shade,
To make all preparations for Saint Patrick's day parade:
Prince Albert coat and cane and tile and p'rhaps an odd dudheen,
And the band a-playing Irish airs—like "The wearin' of the green."

We wrap a sash around our breast, extending to the knee;
A shamrock on our coat lapel—as green as green can be,
And in our hearts there is a joy—a joy that is supreme
As o'er the line of march we go—to "The wearin' of the green."

The pure green flag of Erin with her harp and
sunburst true,
Entwined in perfect union with the dear "Red,
white and blue,"
And how the music tells us that we know no
king or queen,
As cheer on cheer is given as—they proudly hail
the green.

The woes and wrongs of Ireland we well know but
must forget;
The lives they cost, the grief they gave, will gain
her freedom yet;
For in these days of master-minds when just the
right is seen,
We note opinions changing for—that little Isle so
green.

And 'fore this generation is well numbered with
the past,
We'll see the flag of Erin proudly float from top-
most mast;
Her hills and dales will echo and re-echo all
serene,
When Irishmen and women—all will wear her
freedom's green.

MONONGAH

Written on the occasion of the awful mine disaster at Monongah, West Virginia, December, 1907, *in which nearly four hundred lives were lost.*

Fellow Virginians, whose banners and pinions
Have e'er been protected by brain and by brawn;
List' while I chatter to you of a matter,
And give you a subject to meditate on.

We hurry and scurry, we're all in a flurry,
The glorious season of yule-tide is here;

We're counting our friends now, and making amends now,
Preparing, in sooth, for the time of good cheer.

It isn't our make-up to think of or take up
The side which is gloomy—Ah! just the reverse;
But while we are spending and others befriending,
Let's stop for a trice e'er we empty the purse

And try and remember, in this bleak December,
A bier's in our midst, and the mourners are all,
Who join the great legion, and send to the region
The sweet contributions which mellow the pall.

Let not these poor mortals rap once on our portals,
As we know the balm which will remedy all;
And as we well know it, our duty's to show it
To stricken Monongah—who'd answer our call.

"Fat purse and lean one"—(so glad there's no mean one),
Their strings will be loosened as often before,
And drive to his lairings the wolf with his snarings
E'en 'fore his footprints are made at the door.

We cannot return to (Oh! how we would yearn to)
The widow her husband, and father to those
Who watched his returning, with little hearts yearning
To greet him as "papa" at even-tide's close.

But we'll all be brothers to orphans and mothers,
And hoist high the motto—"In God is our trust."
And prove we're Virginians—true to our minions,
And Charity's banner ne'er trailed in the dust.

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER

Upon the right of the big locomotive,
Hand on the throttle and eye on the rail;
Seeing the switch-lights and targets at "safety",
Then driving onward through mountain and dale.

Knight of reverse-bar, cross-head, eccentric;
Knight of the water-gauge, knight of the gong;
Knight of the "19" and "31" order;
Knight of the crossing, while plunging along.

Watching the schedule, his own "time" and others;
Watching the crown-sheet, the boxes and sand;
Watching the air-pump, his true right-hand bower;
Watching for signals the train crews demand.

Now up the mountain-side, now through the tunnel;
Now down the grade, and now bounding the plain;
Now at the water-tank—looking her over—
Engineers duties while hauling the train.

We stand aside as his train thunders onward;
And get his pleased nod as he passes us by;
Out o'er the arm-rest in perfect composure;
"Quite a nice calling" we say with a sigh.

Who would not envy the proud gladiator
Sailing along through a pure atmosphere;
Picture of health, and nothing to trouble;
This is one phase of the glad engineer.

But when we think, there is surely another
Picture to draw of his calling, so grand—
Picture him out in the sunshine of summer;
Picture him then when King Winter's at hand.

Picture the nights when the rain falls in torrents;
Picture the sleet and the treacherous rail;
Picture him catching a quick reverse signal—
Flagged!—and Great God if the air brakes should fail!

Picture the decklights—one hundred yards forward!
Picture a headlight! the bridge washed away!
Picture the leap into blackest of darkness!
Are all his moments so happy and gay?

ONE FLAG; ONE PEOPLE

No North, no South, no East, no West,
  No midnight call, "To arms!"
No yawning trench, no sighing breast,
  No more of war alarms.

No maddened steed, no cannon jar,
  No rivals sound tattoo;
No bonnie flag or single star,
  Just one Red, White and Blue.

No war-like hordes, no blaring guns,
  No thrilling camp-fire tales;
No northern moons, no southern suns,
  No trailing flags or sails.

To-day we take our choicest flowers—
  In sweet remembrance lay
Them on green mounds in silent bowers—
  Thrice blest Memorial Day!

PLAY BALL

Once again we all are happy;
Brother, sister, mother, pappy;
City folk and those yet yappy
  Join in fullest chorus all.
Seated in grand stand and bleacher,
Cheering every well played feature,
And knocking on the hard-luck creature;
  For the umpire called—"Play ball."

See the minister and layman;
Manufacturer and drayman;
Master of the mill and weighman,
  Meeting on a scale the same.
Democrats with hide-bound fetchings;
Republicans with ditto etchings;
Wets and Drys with anti-stretchings,
  All agree! "It's just the game."

Here the one so pessimistic,
Meets the one so optimistic,
And the base ball lingualistic,
  Putting two hours in the past.
Old Man Grump and Old Man Dandy,
Munching peanuts, gum and candy,
Cheering Pat, and coaching Sandy,
  Of their town's team, first to last.

Here we find the shrew and nagger,
Agreeing with the josh and wagger,
On some player's special swagger
  As he bings the "hide" for two.
Then we note the change of feeling
When their hero's caught-a stealing;
"He's a dub"—(beyond concealing),
  And some names not let to view.

Here, too, are the old and young ones;
Quiet folk and glib of tongue ones;
Winners and, of course, the "stung" ones
  (To bet on ball is not a sin).
Beaux and belles of every fashion;
Old-time flirts still bent on mashin';
New rich with their gems a-flashin',
  Rooting for their team to win.

So start early—make it pleasant;
Cheer the boys by being present,
Whether you are peer or peasant,
  Keep the spirit green 'till fall.
Get the habit of best grading;
'Twill preserve your youthful shading,
And keep the hair and face from fading,
  The oftener you hear "Play ball."

MEMORIAL DAY

Scatter the garlands on each grave alike;
  A rose for the blue and a rose for the gray;

Then each, a lily, so pure and so white;
On this day of peace—Memorial Day.

Seal up the book of the radical pen;
Clasp tight the hand in this flowery May;
Apart in opinions—together as men,
Leave the past with the past on this hallowed day.

Each green mantled grave holds the ashes of one
Who fought for the cause that he thought to be true;
And now 'tis a duty—you daughter and son,
To make no distinction 'tween gray and the blue.

As he who was clothed in the garbing of blue,
And he who was garbed in the clothing of gray,
Have long bridged the breach that divided the two,
And God will not ask—"Was the suit blue or gray."

THANKSGIVING DAY

The harvest is in, with it's yieldings, so gracious;
Diversified Autumn is ended and gone;
We sit round the fire in a manner loquacious;
Each smile-bedecked face says that Winter is on.
Spring's truest green, with her roses so fragrant,
Comes to our minds with sweet dreams of the May;
To dote on them now would be rated as flagrant—
What thoughts can surpass those of Thanksgiving Day?

When we, as the year closely nears it's completion
Run back through the gifts so benignly bestowed
By Him, and we find, without prayer or petition,
Stop and send Havenward—thanks to our God.
Thanks for the health He has graciously given;
Thanks for returns we've received by the way;
Thanks, that our thoughts go to Him, high in Heaven,

In one round of praisings—this Thanksgiving
Day.

So on the morn let us seek the seclusion
Of His hallowed shrines, where with reverence
deep,
We'll pour out our heart's love to Him in profusion,
And ask once again that His watchful eye keep
Us e'er in surveillance, as years come and sever,
Until the stern time that Death holds us at bay;
And then—let us ask to be with Him forever—
Where Eternity's naught but one Thanksgiving
Day.

THANKSGIVING

Some trace the custom back to the Mosaic;
Some give to sturdy old England the praise;
Some give the honor to Holland prosaic,
But we just turn back to the Puritan days
And say it's American simply, and true;
Claiming naught else than is justly our due.

Special events, so deserving of glory;
Selfishly held by a country or clan:
Though that event be well clothed in the gory,
Have e'er had a day for their praisings by man.
And much the rejoicings, and many's the prayer
From hearts, now made gracious, resound on the air.

But Thanksgiving Day in the land of the freeman
Is given to thoughts of the blessings bestowed—
Not by forced measure of soldier and seaman—
But sweet, peaceful blessings as dowered by God.
And one day each year we sing, chant and pray
Our praises to Him on our Thanksgiving Day.

So on this day we will seek first Thy portals;
Pour out our hearts, just as well as we know
And ask You accept from us poor finite mortals,

Our sincerest thanks for Thy bounties. Then
go
Forth to the battle of Life, where we'll woo
The crown—or the cross, if so ordained by You.

TO A MARBLE SHAFT

Chill, mute memento to a mesh of clay
Or rotting flesh, or crumbling bones
From which a soul has long since passed away,
To one of either great Unknowns.
Yet you stand, head erect, and brave,
On picket duty, o'er a grave.

Your bold demeanor and defiant air,
Does make us pause and think awhile;
And figure just how long that you've been there;
To know who keeps you in such style—
With well-shorn lawn of Nature's green—
Sweet-scented shrubs and roses e'en.

Your curt inscriptions tell a happy tale
Of him who lies beneath your mold;
All of the good his living did this vale
Of tears. And tells how very bold
He was, when dangers swept the land—
A soldier we must understand.

A benefactor too, of much renown,
The poor relieved, where'er he trod
He never wore, not he, it states, a frown
And died in perfect peace with God!
The penner of the epitaph,
Extols his virtues, only half.

We pass it on. Go further, further on:
Companion shafts of equal poise
Appear. We find no chiseled words of wan
Or doleful mien. Each dead enjoys,
(If we believe the one who sings)
A throne of grace, and golden wings.

THE CHURCH END-HOG

His seat is in the center aisle,
'Bout half way, I would count,
Between the blest Communion rail
And the Holy-Water fount.
Though it may seem quite strange to state,
He never comes to service late.

'Tis just the opposite with him,
He's always first one in,
As if he feels his chances slim
As those emeshed in sin;
Yet, lay one measly fault aside,
He's sort o' half-way sanctified.

He always sits, with gracious smile
And military pose,
And holds the end-seat all the while;
Yet bows and bends to those
Who, "just for manner's sake," keep still
And smile a *thin* smile 'gainst their will.

These "bows and bends," now understand,
Are just for ladies who
Unfortunately do command
A section of *his* pew.
The men who wish to take a seat
Must wrestle with his knees and feet.

We sit a-rear, a seat or so,
And watch him play his part
With so much militant ego,
Well learned, and so by heart,
We sympathize with him a bit,
Because de don't move in and sit.

* * *

(Post obitum.)

And now we see him, glory bound
In chariot of gold;
We see the others gathered 'round,

All pleased, and rightly goaled;
The end-seat now he'll gently scoff,
For fear he might be jolted off.

'TIS EASTER MORN

Two sad, aye two heart-rending days have passed;
Two awful days of dire suspense! Yes, we
Have been without our Comforter, and classed
Alike the storm-tossed derelict at sea.
No Master-hand to guide us o'er our darkened way,
But tossed by every wind, and smote by dashing spray.

Or like some traveller on an unknown path,
When clouds hang low and thunders roll on roll;
And lightnings add their terrors, all a-wrath,
Each striving on for mastery. Poor soul!
But—Hark! Rejoice! Once more we hear that joyous lay,
Telling—"Christ is risen!" "It is Easter Day!"

With us again! Our joy well knows no bound!
With outstretched arms and countenance aglow!
Again we hear his words, so mild-profound,
And showing plain the road He'd have us go.
How soft and sweet His message to us once again—
His blessed—"Peace, sweet peace on Earth—good will towards men."

TO A SKELETON

You stand up in your case of glass,
A perfect picture of contentment;
All things may come to stay or pass,
And yet you offer no resentment.

If times be e'er so far from good,
You never show the least displeasure

But grin, grin on as others should,
And spend your time in stolid leisure.

You never worry 'bout the styles,
Be they the "Princess" or "Directiore";
You're troubled ne'er by whims or wiles,
A featured eyeless circumspector.

You're tortured not by pain or ache,
Like cramps or chronic indigestion;
You wonder not if meats will take,
The strictest government inspection.

You never join in gossiping,
And never talk about your neighbor;
To all, the still-tongued song you sing
And ne'er complain about your labor.

In-growing nails and bunions sore,
With aching corns, ne'er give you trouble;
None e'er consider you a bore,
And yet none strive to be your double.

And you'll be here when we are gone,
Perhaps in number one condition,
But I'd like to have it settled on,
That I'll ne'er be on exhibition.

HALLOWEEN

To-night's the night the fairies dance;
Hobgoblins strut in classic style;
Weird banschees stoop to do their prance,
Though lying dormant, such a while.
We now keep watch upon the green;
In ghoulish costumes all are seen;
This happy night—"All Halloween."

Old and young, (no old ones there,
The old are young this special night)
Play every prank—they're all so fair —

To keep the spooks in chill affright.
All cares are tossed to windward—they
Have no place *this* night to stay
When all's a merry-making way.

We'll make the windows all aglow
In brilliant splendor everywhere;
We'll burn the bonfires high and low,
To show the fairies *we* are there.
We'll bite the apple on the string;
We'll eat our taffy, nuts, and sing;
We'll make old pumpk' a hideous thing.

And why not celebrate this night?
To-morrow, and the saints are here;
To do them honor with our might
Is why we spend this night in cheer.
Then following the "All Saints" tread,
Next day "All Souls"—our cherished dead—
Who ask that goodly prayers be said.

We'll sing the praise of Phocas, he
Who gave to Blessed Boniface
The Pantheon—(when Rome was free)—
To be a Christian playing-place.
We'll ever keep his memory green
And celebrate in proper mien—
He gave us place for Halloween.

THE MODEL HUSBAND

I've often heard men spoken of—
Married men I mean—
As being "model husbands,"
By their cherished household queen;
And knowing them so thoroughly,
Never once I'd blame
Their "better halves" for calling them
That most deserving name.
I've heard it, yes, a million times,
This grand remark applied—

Like—"Mollie picked a model man
When she became a bride"—
"Katie got a model, too,"
"Yes Will's a model man,"
And "Henry's been a model
Since his earthly life began."
I've often stopped and listened,
Where these comments seemed so free,
But never heard them mentioned yet,
In reference to me.
And lots of other fellows seem
To figure in my class,
And—"Proud congratulations, boys,
Because they let us pass."
For "model," as per Webster,
Has a quite unenvied ring;
He says it's just an imitation
Of the real thing.

"DEATH"

Who Named It This?

We stand beside the sick bed of a tried and trusted friend.
The stamp of Death (as earthly rites will call)
Is plainly seen. A little while and we will see the end—
The end of what is mortal—this is all.
The wife, the dear old mother and the father, bent with age,
Are racking every brain-cell to conceive
One more loving act of kindness, to be added to the page,
Now filled to overflowing, 'fore the leave
Is taken. And then, and then the awful moments in between!
The staring eyes! The heavy breath! The grasp!
That gasp! That last charge of Life's old guard is seen—

To try and wrench this dear one from Death's grasp.
Useless to fight on, against a foe so ultra-strong and true.
The rattling sounds are spaced much longer now.
We watch the countenance rebel—just once—then —all is through,
And Death has won! 'Tis stamped so on the brow.
Then wail on wail, of human anguish, breaks the silence there
Heart-springs gush so copiously, too;
The loved one's soul is now before God's bar of Justice—where
Only right is right to Christian, Heathen, Jew.
Why all these wails? Why all these sobs, caused by these snapping ties?
Why all this mourning for a soul that's gone?
Why sombre hues, when we are taught so well contrariwise?
Oh, we of little faith! Why can't the right light dawn
Upon us? That light which shows that happy soul,
Has merely gone the path that saints have trod,
And Death is Life—Emancipation's envied goal—
A life for all Eternity—with God.

THE POLICEMAN

With bright shiny buttons, on garbing of blue;
With helmet, all prim and petite;
On to the proverbial, wide bottomed shoe,
And we have his regalia, complete—
Except, I may mention the belt 'round his waist,
Just to carry his club—not a matter of taste.

We watch him go shambling about on his "beat",
With that nonchalant sort of an air;
Pleasant to all—with a nod as you meet—

And a chat with a friend here and there.
Ready to answer, and, ready to ask,
'Till we think—well, his job's not a muscular task.

He swipes a few peanuts from Pedro's fruit stand;
Some apples from Widow McKean;
He might take a drink if you'd ask him to, and
You'd have it served, back of the screen.
Of course it's a duty, from spring until fall
To be on the bench at the umpire's—"Play ball!"

"Fine life!" we must think, but have we said all?
The cheerful is all we have told;
We've not yet discussed him, when blinding snows fall,
And his long dreary vigils, so cold!
Those nights when the well-tutored vandal will go
To his dastardly work, through the frost and the snow.

Nor have we yet shown him, when riot runs wild;
When man's better judgment is dead;
When all that was peaceful and all that was mild
Is gone, and the mob's in their stead:
Though strange it may sound, it seems human to boast
In his fight against odds—if the peacemaker lost.

How true could we cite other cases, and show
His calling—alike every one—
The one side beams out in its brightness, aglow;
The other so hid from the sun.
So, Mister Policeman, enjoy well your day,
We envy you neither—your work or your play.

TO FRANCE

Our hearts go out to thee, fair France,
In purest Christian charity;
And we, across Atlantic's waves,
Extend sincerest sympathy.

Our purse strings, too, are loosed, and all
Stand ready, at thy beck and call.

Thy fate is doubly sad, indeed;
  Thou hast no God, to whom to pray
When dangers come! We must believe
  This is an awful chastening day.
The hand that rules the flood—the breeze—
Controls as well thy destinies.

Thou'st said that God from thee must go.
  Thy navy, army, schools, must cease
To know His name. Thou'st said "Begone!"
  To Him the world style—"Prince of Peace."
The ancient faith, that made the free,
Is scoffed as sheerest mockery.

Whene'er custodians presume
  To own the things entrusted to
Their care and keep, 'tis then we see
  The one with title clear, renew
His claim in ways pronounced and bland—
Aye—France forgot who owned the land!

Not yet a century ago,
  Napoleon lost, at Waterloo;
'Twas not by English bullets, nor
  The fact that Grouchy proved untrue;
'Twas not through Blucher's Prussian squad—
Your Hugo tells—'Twas God!—'Twas God!

And now another lesson, true
  Is laid athwart thy threshold: when
The classic Seine rolls madly on,
  To break and wreck the prides of men.
Awake from thine agnostic trance
Ye blinded sons of Godless France!

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE TONSILITIS AND YOU CAN'T GO OUT.

When a feller's feelin' good and strong and hearty as a buck,
And he doesn't think of nothin' else but baseball and such truck;
When he plays his part at balls and games and circusses and "sich,"
Do you think that that there feller ever stops to think he's rich?
We answer in the negative—we've been there—this is why
We answer thus. 'Twould not be right to make it worse—to lie;
But when we've overdone the thing and cooled before we ought,
And we wake up in the morning with a red ripe cold, just caught;
With the shivers chasin' through your spine, your forehead like on fire,
And every bone, from aches and pains, seems never once to tire;
When your jaws begin to chatter and unsteady if your tread,
And you feel as if ten swarms of bees "wuz gethered" in your head;
When your appetite, so good and strong, is on vacation too,
An' the blanket feels, oh, just so good, when once the sheet would do,
An' you send for "Doc" to come an' tell what this is all about—
When he says: "It's tonsilitis and
You
can't
go
out."

Well, you're layin' in your bedroom, an' oh, goodness, but you're sick;

Your nerves are such you even hate to hear your
watch's tick;
The mattress seems so hilly like—the pillows far
from straight;
You hear the clock strike one, two, three—Oh,
would that it was eight!
You gargle every little bit, then take a quinine pill;
You simply burn in splotches an' at other points you
chill;
You fall into a doze at times for one-sixth hour or
more,
An' you simply "dream those horrid dreams no
mortal dreamed before;"
You hear your best friends tripping by—they haven't
heard as yet
That their good congenial comrade has to undergo
a sweat;
You hear their merry laughter, which last week was
crisp and tart,
But just now you can't see in it anything so extra
smart.
The call is made at mealtimes—it don't interest a
bit—
The jingle of the dishes seems the coarsest kind of
wit,
But you have to take your medicine in doses "good
an' stout,"
As you have the tonsilitis—an'
You
can't
go
out.

THEN AND NOW

1893.

In Eighteen hundred and ninety-three,
Times were mighty hard;
"Sleddin' was tough" for you and me,
As times were mighty hard;

Coxey's armies marched about,
"Hard times" was the hourly shout,
A Democrat took chances out,
For times were cussed hard.

Mines and factories all shut down,
As times were awful hard;
Big husky workmen walked the town,
For times were mighty hard;
No use to travel here or there,
Conditions were similar everywhere,
'Twas up to us to grin and bear,
As times were mighty hard.

The Republican press—with ink so red—
When times were mighty hard;
In every column—at the head,
Told—"Times are awful hard;"
Prominent places were kept for those—
Displayings of—"A factory's close,"
"A cut in wages"—in she goes—
And kept times mighty hard.

The Democrats were blamed for all,
When times were mighty hard;
They said—"We'll fix you in the fall
And times won't be so hard;"
Spellbinders stumped the country through;
"Soup house" was oft alluded to—
If one there was—I never knew,
Though times were good and hard.

In every campaign since that year,
That times were awful hard;
Just listen—this is what you'll hear:
"Times were mighty hard;"
They'll give this *rot* to you and me—
"Do you want the times of ninety-three?"
"Then vote for William Jennings, B."
And times will be good and hard.

Old Time "whose haste no mortal spares,"
  Though times be good or hard;
Now shows us after fourteen years,
  That times are good and hard;
But, loyal sons we all must be,
And say "we're in prosperity;"
E'en though we know we l-i-e,
  For times are cussed hard.

The "mills have shut down for repairs,"
  They say, as times are hard,
But they take no stock in "bulls or bears,"
  Of course times aren't hard;
They called it "panic" in Ninety-three,
They call it now a "stringency",
Or "industrial inactivity;"
  'Course *times* are not so hard.

They cry "prosperity" long and loud—
  (And say—"times aren't hard,")
As they drop a tear plunk, on her shroud,
  'Course times are not so hard;
I'll ask this question—who will tell?
I'm sure I'll treat the answer well—
If it isn't a panic—what the hell
  Makes times so cussed hard?

"MAUD MULLER"

(As she might have been)

John Whittier sat on a three-legged stool,
  With an old "Mother Goose" quill to serve as a pen;
And jotted to rhyme with this blamed old tool—
  "The saddest are these—it might have been."

At first he tells us of Maud's quaint charms;
  How the dear old judge was struck with awe;

'Till you'd think she'd ne'er been entwined in arms,
Or never had uttered these words—"See pa."
(or ma.)

Then he'd also have us think that she
Had ne'er been kissed—'though past sixteen;
That she and Dan Cupid could not agree—
He must have figured her—"mighty green."

Supposing Maudie did rake the hay;
I'd reckon her father had told her to;
Supposing the judge looked back that day—
He did no more than he ought to do.

What if her ankles were "bare and brown"?
That's why the judge looked back again;
May be trimmer than those in town—
"Of all 'glad' words of tongue or pen."

Supposing her husband was "young and poor";
He'd fatten again if she'd feed him right;
For they say that Maud was a cook for sure
And her husband—a scandalous appetite.

So far as John himself's concerned,
(That's John G. Whittier I mean)
I hardly think he had ever learned,
To love, and flirt some, in between.

And as for the judge—of "Common Pleas,"
Or "Probate Court" or judge supreme,
He mayhap unravel Blackstone with ease—
A thorough judge of fact and theme—

But if the old scout understood the game;
He'd have hitched, forthwith, at the meadow gate;
Trundled in—found out her name—
Shown his credentials and made a date.

Had he done this—the chances are
He'd have called and called and called again,
And John would have never gone so far,
As "The saddest are these—it might have been."

THE RAPE OF NATURE

(These lines were penned at Stony Bottom, Pocahontas County, W. Va., August 10, 1907, *in a spirit of resentment against the ruthless work of timber cutters.)*

With a pad on my knee, dear,
I'm penning to thee, dear
A line of myself—emblematic.
Though not sentimental,
Nor yet Continental,
But very much straight Democratic.

In the Greenbrier mountains,
Whose natural fountains
Have slaked the wild deer of his thirsting,
I am plying trading,
And merchants invading
And drinking pure water to bursting.

Now, when God made this section,
His intention, I'd reckon,
Was a home for the wild beast and savage;
But the white man came onward
(Moonward and sunward)
Its pure virgin forest to ravage.

The forest's depleted
The rape is completed,
All Nature held sacred has vanished;
The she-bear and brother,
The fawn and its mother,
And Lo, the poor Indian, are banished.

The Greenbrier river
Rolls on with a quiver
Polluted by chemical lotion.
It hastes to connection
In southwest direction,
And happy when lost in the ocean.

The stump of the pine tree;
The hemlock and vine tree
  Exchanges of sorrow are granting.
The fire-ravished hillside,
The snake—haunted rillside
  Inanimate requiems are chanting.

I turn back the pages
And stop at the ages
  When Nature was absolute master.
Then I picture the white man,
Let's hope he's a right man—
  Who wrought all this awful disaster.

BEFORE AND AFTER—MATRIMONY

He, who's not yet benedicted
And matrimony ne'er predicted,
Sometimes touches the presumptious
  By the route of counsel, cold
Smacking of the chill precision,
He'd attend to each decision
That came down from his tribunal
  Autocratic'ly and bold.

Would his mandates be disputed,
Disregarded—even hooted;
By a member of the fair sex,
  Whom he'd wooed and won—his wife?
No siree, he'd rule the mansion;
To his music she'd be dancin',
He would rule with rod of iron,
  You can bet your very life.

Let that woman dare to mention
That she'd show least non-attention
To his drastic-like demandings—
  He'd show her a thing or two.
Tell her—"Go and hunt another,"
"Pack your duds and back to mother,"

"I'm the power supreme, my lady,"
"I'll advise the things to do."

He will be the one loquacious,
Simply IT and so audacious—
Let her mention 'bout his being
In at any certain hour;
Let her say she's even thinking,
Of shutting off his smokes or drinking;
He would give one pointed lesson
On his deep-laid one man power.

Well, he marries—all is clover
'Till the honey-moon is over;
Then we notice her beside him
On his self-constructed throne;
Taking part in all arrangements,
Helping heal those first estrangements;
Telling him how matrimony
Differs from the single zone.

Now we see him at the social.
Strictly stag; he's oh, so docile.
Notice how he waxes restless—
(Already known as "Hen-pecked Hen")
When the speakers grow ecstatic
Sentimental and dramatic,
See him ducking 'twixt the encores—
"Told Kate I'd be in at ten."

THE DAGO AND HUNKY

We see him go trundling along on his way,
In his garbing so odd and emphatic;
His carpet-bag high on his shoulders—we say
He is anything else than dramatic.

Although he is playing a distinctive role
That none could portray if they'd try it;
We give him no credit, 'though deep from our soul
We should, and there's none will deny it.

We note the short coat that we call the "seemore",
With it's binding, inch-wide and all shiny;
We pipe the short pants bought from Schmalkenstein's store
And we say—"just from over the briny."

We note the alertness displayed in his eye,
And we find he is snappy and spunky;
Then we all agree, as he passes us by—
He's a Slav or a Dago or Hunky.

Well—all very good. The names thus applied,
If said without thought or precision,
Will do very well—but who'll coincide
When he knows they've been said in derision.

If one, he's a knave, as who is so dumb
But knows that our most cherished nation
Is made up of those who have left home and come
To us from all spots on creation.

As time goes apace all will rightly be classed
As Americans—able and spunky—
For, what a short time since our forefathers passed
Up the street like the Dago and Hunky.

TO LINCOLN

A hundred years, and, one year more,
Have gone the way of man and time
Since you were born—and well we note
In old Kentucky's sunny clime.
Kentucky ever proud must be
For being first to nurture thee.

What was your heritage, just then?
A bed of straw; a puncheon floor;
A hut of logs with clay a-daub—
We will not, must not ask, what more.
And if we knew, our pen would fail
Through sheer respect to tell the tale.

But beds of straw, and huts of logs
And puncheon floors can not restrain
Or e'en retard the brimming forth
Of God's great gift—a master brain.
As master brains of such degree,
Ne'er perish in obscurity.

The scoffs and scorns of haughty pride;
The jibes and jeers of ignorance,
Seemed but to serve as stepping stones
To your success and right advance.
A mind like yours—from bias free,
Knows, "Silence is best repartee."

And Phœnix-like, from ashen pit,
You sprung and blossomed, clear and pure;
Until a nation hailed you as
Her chosen son. Was ever truer
One so found to mark the breeze
And guide her ship to peaceful seas?

A nation mourned, when lightning flashed
The words that told that Death had claimed
You as his own. That nation now
Reveres and honors you, and named
A special day to sing your praise—
We wish a countless Lincoln Days!

THOSE COFFIN-LID FLOWERS

We're thinking now, how nice 'twould be,
When we have reached the golden shore;
If we could but look back and see
Our cold, dead body, just once more;
And see the flowers, piled upon
Our coffin lid when we are gone.

The "Broken Column"; "Gates Ajar";
Fraternal emblems, big and wide,
From "C. of K's" and "Western Star"—
And lilies, banked on every side.

Yet, all our senses mute and dumb;
Can't e'en say "Thanks!" for flowers that come.

Again, 'twould be so nice to hear
  The pretty comments that are paid
To us, by all our friends, so dear,
  As we lie calm and undismayed.
Of course, the first one we'd hear said—
"He looks so natural—though dead!"

"I saw him just a week ago!"
  "You'd never think he had a pain!"
"The nicest man we'll ever know!"
  "We'll never see his smile again!"
"He died a peaceful death, they say—
Just closed his eyes and passed away!"

Then to behold the "last sad rites."
  To hear the words the preacher said.
The band exuding solemn flights
  Of slow, soft music, up ahead.
To see the mourners, all in black,
A-riding in the foremost hack.

To hear the clods, in their tattoo,
  A-pouncing on the rough-box lid;
With all the intercessions through,
  And our chill form from view is hid.
To see the drivers—hearse and hack—
A-trying to beat each other back.

* * * *

Another thought—those flowers we see
  Upon that coffin lid of ours
Grow while we live; for you and me
  Are all these sweet and tinted flowers.
So we would say, if such you'd give,
We'll take a portion while we live.

COSMOPOLITAN WEST VIRGINIA

They may talk of the city of Manhattan Island,
Where "Babel's outdone, far as tongues are concerned,"
But right here at home, in our own West Virginia,
We've tongues by the score, as the writer has learned.

I've been from fair Hancock to far off McDowell,
From Wayne on the west-land to Berkeley's green hills,
Through lumber camps, oil regions, coal fields and farm-lands,
Glass-houses; potteries, and big rolling mills.

And I find in my travels the Coolie from China,
The almond-eyed Jap from far off Tokio,
The Russian and Servian, Turk and Romanian,
And perhaps a full fifty from Montenegro.

And one here and there from the land of Magellan,
Swedes and Norwegians, the Dutchman and Dane,
French, just a few, and perhaps a score Belgians,
Germans by thousands, and a hundred from Spain.

Austrians and Slavs, Poles and Hungarians,
Syrians, Greeks and Italians galore,
The Switzer, the Scotchman, the English and Welshman,
And a few politicians from Ireland's green shore.

Then, in fancy, I pull back the veil from the future,
And see our state ten generations from now,
And find Mose McGuire, Don Alfonso Ericson,
Giovana DeCarnot and Fritz Ah Lee How.

Olaf Polinski, Robert Burns Hamid,
Gwendolyne Jansen and Gladys O'Rourke.

Dave Caravosius, Alfonso MacDonald,
Giesuppe Flaherty, Ito La Turk.

VanVoorhis Goldstein, Bridget O'Truschel,
Ludwig McLaughlin and Abdul Modi,
Rashid McAlpin and Gomez Don Weyler,
The greatest of crossings beneath the blue sky.

WEST VIRGINIA

From old Kentucky's sun and shine,
To dear Virginia's sun and snow;
From the Maryland—Pennsylvania line,
To the fair Ohio's southward flow;
Our little state of mounts and hills;
Of roaring streams and peaceful rills;
With joy each heart-throb rightly thrills—
'Tis West Virginia—all well know.

Our parents loved her hilly soil,
And we, her children, love it too;
Though poor returnings for our toil,
We found a home where freedom grew.
The Golden Rule, we always see—
'Twas taught to you, and taught to me,
With—"Montani Semper Liberi"—
Of West Virginia—rightly true.

Those olden days—those golden days,
Will e'er be held in memory true;
When we, so proudly sang her lays
In our own ways—the best we knew.
The Muses sang at each new birth;
They sang when giving back to earth;
They sang in sadness—sang in mirth,
'Neath West Virginia's skies of blue.

We ope'd our doors and welcome bade
To those of near and foreign clime;
We shared with them of all we had

We sang their praise in song and rhyme;
E'en though their minds, as minds must do,
Revert to homes when minds were new—
They're West Virginians tried and true—
And love the West Virginia chime.

THIS CHRISTMAS DAY

Ye bells in the steeples, ring out in glad peal;
Announce to the world, the new Ruler is here.
Announce to the drear Darkness—"He's broken your seal."
Announce that the gateway to Heaven is clear.

And, once more announce, as your sounds pierce the glen,
And echo from hill-top to valley below—
"Sweet peace be on earth, and good will to all men!"
The same hallowed message of ages ago.

Ye choirs, meek possessors of musical lore,
Sing proud hallelujahs this happiest morn;
"Adestes" and "Glorias" as never before—
This chiefest of days when a Saviour is born.

Ye instruments, toned by most expert of hands,
Pour forth sweetest strains on this glad Christmas Day,
Respond to each touch, as your master commands;
Though truly inanimate—now—ye obey.

Sing sweetest hosannas, ye worshippers, sing;
Arise and go forth like the wise men of old;
With incense and myrrh to the stable-born King—
The King of all kings—by the prophets foretold.

Aye, often told story of Bethlehem's Star;
Though sounded for ages, e'en younger does grow;

And why? 'Tis Redemption's light beck'ning afar—
Divine in its origin—God willed it so.

UNCLE "WELT"

He lived on a farm, 'bout the usual size;
A hundred full acres, or, possibly more;
Quiet, yet cheerful and happy and wise—
Of good common sense—he'd a wonderful store.
Was the most philosophical man that we knew;
Enjoyed well life's pleasures, but if a reverse
Would come, he'd invariably so much imbue
Us with the idea—"It might o' been worse."

Always looked pleasant, and, was pleasant too,
With his happy "Good Morning", or gracious "Good Day";
The bright side of everything shone out so true
To him, in his most optomistical way.
If drought cut his crops to a ten per cent. yield,
Or, to such an extent, it depleted his purse
He'd simply look forward to next year; and healed
Any wound to his heart, with—"It might o' been worse."

When famine and pestilence swept through the land,
And for their reward claimed the old and the young
With those in between, until hill-top and strand
Re-echoed with prayers from most every tongue
To Him up on high in His mercy to spare
Their loved ones from pestilence, death, and the hearse:
When, finally over, and Death had his share
He'd say to the living, "It might o' been worse."

If some well-known neighbor—his boy, or his girl
Had been indiscreet while in thoughtless-like veins;

Then on came the gossips, *their* tale to unfurl
In magnified forms, from self-magnified brains;
You'd find him alert as a doer of right;
Hearing both sides in a manner most terse,
Then, handing down that "decision of might"—
"Who'll throw the first stone?" or "It might o'
been worse."

Enemies? He? No. A man of his kind,
Who's learned well the lesson of charity, true,
Is courted by all, though at times you may find
Some one he's offended on first interview;
But this very one, later on, you will note,
Singing his praises in prose and in verse;
As, who so depraved, but will revel and gloat
In the fact he's a friend to—"It mght o' been
worse."

He died, and the neighborhood well knew its loss;
The funeral cortege this story well told.
Who'll now be the sage, simple truths to emboss
On shimmering folly—and facts pure and cold?
Our fanciful thoughts, show the Judge, and, the
man
Before the Great Bar, where there's nothing
adverse
To his gaining Heaven, but be this not the plan
I feel that I hear him say—"Might o' been
worse."

THE SISTER

"Dark-garbed angel"—thus it was I
Thought of her in early youth,
When she sat and told me stories—
Stories of the living truth:
Of the Lord of all Creation;
All of our first Paradise;
Then of Heaven and its beauties
In the land beyond the skies:

Of the Blessed Mother-Mary;
Of the angels—all of them—
Of the special one that guards me;
Of the Babe of Bethelem;
Of the flight to far-off Egypt;
Of His teachings; how He prayed;
Of the kiss of traitor Judas
Who this Blessed One betrayed;
Of His trial 'fore Pontius Pilate;
Of His sentence—doomed to die—
Of His meekest resignation;
Of His trip up Calvary;
Of the cruel Jews who pierced His
Blessed hands and blessed side;
Of His—"Father it is finished"—
Last words of the Crucified.
Gave me rosaries and medals;
Holy pictures; Christian lore;
Taught to me my catechism—
'Way back in those days of yore.
How she'd quell my childish troubles,
When her magic-pillowed palm
Placed upon my fevered forehead,
Would dispel each pain and qualm.
Loved her? Loved her next to mother;
All she said was law to me,
And the doing of her biddings
Filled me with such ecstasy.

* * * * *

Time plod on—I grew to manhood,
Left, where I was born and bred;
Quite forgot my sister-teacher
As athrough the world I sped.
New-made friends and new surroundings,
Change of scene and change of clime—
Sad to state—will often make us
Thoughtless of the oldentime.
Thoughtless—but to be forgiven
When our tales they gently scan;

They, our friends, who know the battle,
When Life crosses swords with man.

* * * *

Time still plods—my wanderings take me
Back to scenes I now call joys:
Joys—but my, the many "troubles"
That we had when girls and boys.
When with system worn from worry,
Work and much anxiety
I was stricken with a fever,
Typhoid, and the worst degree.
To the hospital they took me,
Placed me on my cleanly bed—
"Have to keep him very quiet"—
Were the words the doctor said.
Made arrangements that the nursing
Should be done by deftest hands—
Heard the Mother say—"Yes, Doctor,
We will follow your demands."
Then, dear Lord, did I deserve it?
Who was sent to care for me—
But that self-same—"Dark-garbed angel"—
Whom I'd loved in infancy.
What more blessings could I ask for—
What care I how soon I died,
With my soul, so cleansed by pennance,
And an angel by my side.
Same soul-windowed eyes of hazel;
Same God-fashioned saintly smile;
Same palm-pillowed hand upon my
Forehead as in yonderwhile!
Smoothed the wrinkles from my pillow;
Kept the covers taut around;
In her movements—hence and thither,
Silent—lest she make a sound.
Day or night, at each awakening,
Always near me—there to do
What was best for convalescing:
When she'd rest, I never knew.

Days went by—I passed the crisis;
Happy, when she told me so.
Happy? Yes. I asked her tell me
Stories like the long ago.
Turned the hands of Time back thirty
Years, perhaps, or may be more;
Told them as I best remember,
Word, for word, as told before.
Glad she told the stories over;
Glad my faith in them was true;
Glad to know that well-told stories,
Told in childhood cling all through
Life. And when we're grown to manhood,
How we love them told again!
Man is better when he reckons—
Children—'though grown up to men!

* * * *

Nursed me back to health and vigor;
Started out in life once more;
Seemingly as from her class-room
In those happy days of yore.

* * * *

Once again there're miles between us,
And how oft my thoughts go back
To that awful burning fever
And that sister—garbed in black.
How she sent up intercessions,
To that All-indulgent One;
Asking in His mercy, spare me,
Closing with, "Thy will be done."
Back, back to those simple stories,
Told me when a little boy:
Stories that have brought me solace;
Stories that have brought me joy.
Now, perhaps, I'll never meet her
Here on earth, to clasp her hand:
When she dies—I ask our Saviour—
"Take her to Thy Holy Land."
Then—when I receive the summons,

That my soul must take its flight—
How I hope to meet "my sister"—
Garbed in Heaven's purest white.

HOW ZEKE GOT ACQUAINTED WITH JIM

He drifted in one day in spring,
By foot—all travel worn and weary;
A carpet bag was everything
He had. And things would look quite dreary
To a wanderer with less grit,
But it ne'er affected him a bit.

Would weigh two hundred pounds, I'd say;
'Bout twenty-eight—five feet eleven;
Thick raven locks—just tinged with gray,
And wore, I'd guess, a "number seven."
Face and hands of perfect mold;
His clothes—the very latest sold.

From whence he came, nobody knew;
But he was here, and there it ended;
Was sired and born like me and you,
So, present judgment is suspended.
He'd only talk on things—to date;
The "past is blank"—he'd coyly state.

He asked about a certain man,
(We'll call him Jones, to tell the story)
Who owned large farms, and also ran
The grist mill. And to Joneses glory
We will say, we knew none better,
Honest, to the very letter.

Jones had houses, here and there,
Where "squatters" used to come and settle;
Those folks who raise stuff, "on the share,"
And leave your place in worst of fettle.
Leaving, always, 'bout when you'd
Begin to think them doing good.

To one of Joneses two-roomed "shacks,"
  This stranger went. At once he started
To patch the floor and daub the cracks,
  And shingle where the roof was parted.
Weather-boarded it so neat;
It looked first rate, with all complete.

Put plain carpet on the floor;
  Made his bed-stead, strong and steady;
Filled his pantry from the store;
  Bought a stove, and all was ready.
Then set in to plow and sow—
Always found him on the go.

Handiest lad, you ever knew;
  Fix most anything you'd mention;
Solder tinware—mend a shoe;
  Gave fixing watches strict attention.
Always put these jobs away,
To do upon a rainy day.

My, you should have heard him sing;
  The meadow-lark was never in it.
Could dance a clog, or buck and wing—
  Happy—seemed like—every minute.
Could turn ten hand-springs on the fly
Or vault a fence some ten feet high.

Queerest chap you ever saw;
  Could talk on any subject, splendid;
We often guessed he'd studied law,
  But ask him—here the question ended.
The thing we worried most about—
He'd ne'er give information out.

Though so strong and powerful,
  He never fussed with anybody;
And every country section will
  Always have its fighting rowdy.
One was in this section, too,
And sent word just what he could do.

Never will forget the note
That our friend sent to this fellow;
Said so seldom that he wrote
On subjects that were quite so mellow,
But, if to fighting, he'd aspire
Come on—Yours truly, Jim McGuire.

"Jim McGuire!"—first time we knew
What his name was—First time ever
We'd a chance to see him do
Any fighting—bet he's clever
With his fists, they all would guess,
If he'd get mixed in a mess.

The other fellow—Zeke Minear—
Soon's he got Jim's note, got busy;
Said he'd show that "buccaneer"
Just how quick he put him dizzy.
Everybody held their breath,
Expecting—well—a fight to death.

Time arrived, and Zeke and Jim
Met, 'bout ten, one Sunday morning.
Zeke thought he'd take no chance with him
So started 'thought a minute's warning.
When I said he started in,
I meant, he started to begin.

Jim he deviled Zeke a bit;
Parried 'bout half a minute;
Found the place to make the hit
And whaled away for all 'twas in it.
If 'twasn't for a fence well set
Zeke'd be agoing yet.

Zeke, he couldn't understand
Just what happened when he wakened;
Said he "heard a big brass band"
Or he was sure enough "mistakened."
Said "he'd seen more stars just then
Then any of them astron'mer men."

Jim then handed Zeke his card,
  One he'd taken from his sireland;
It told that Jim McGuire had starred
  As champion heavy-weight of Ireland.
But wasn't fighting all the while—
He used his fist for driving pile.

Zeke "allowed" he'd done it square—
  Never asked a second trial
Said he'd licked *men*—foul and fair—
  But ne'er before posed for a pile.
This brought his fighting to a close,
But wore, from then, a crooked nose.

Then the whole blamed thing came out,
  Zeke was mean, and all well knew it;
They hired Jim—big, young and stout
  To whip him—Jim agreed to do it.
If you want the truth whereof I speak
Just telephone or wire Zeke.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER BROWN

I knew him well from babyhood.
  In early youth a careless chap.
And those who knew him, "real good"
  Would say—"exactly like his pap."
His pap was just a shiftless cuss—
  A "squatter," as we called his kind;
Who never cared for fame or fuss,
  And always had a peaceful mind.
Just so he had enough to wear,
And eat and drink—he didn't care.

His name, and I remember right,
  Was William Brown—they called him Bill.
From whence he came; to whence his flight,
  We never knew, nor never will.
This world to him was one sweet song;
  If troubles headed towards his place,

He simply beckoned them along—
  They couldn't meet him face to face.
And as the Good Book—Chapter One—
Would say—this Bill begat a son.

Though far from the presuming kind,
  Or any selfish thought or will,
He named him (first name to his mind)
  Just ordinary William—Bill.
This Bill's the one I first discussed,
  As knowing from his baby-time;
Who, like his "Pa," was so unfussed,
  And never dreamed himself in rhyme.
But this is just exactly who
I'm going to pay me "ree-spects" to—

But just before I tell of him
  I'll mention something 'bout his—"Ma"—
Quiet, prosey—rather slim—
  A perfect running mate for "Pa."
She rubbed a little (snuff I mean)
  Her lips were never tempting, 'cause
The snuff it stuck some, in between
  And trickled somewhat, down her jaws.
And worry fled from her, we'd see,
As from the "glance of destiny."

Well, Bill grew up, just like his "pap,"
  With such a peaceful sort of mind.
A sunny, but a lazy chap,
  As one could ever rightly find.
His teachers ne'er could get him by
  The first, or elementary class;
As Bill himself would never try,
  His hustling class-mates to surpass.
If anything, surpassingly
Was done 'twas not in *his* degree.

The little patch his father had,
  ('Twas given him through courtesy)

Fifty acres—mostly bad—
Of course Bill was the heir, in fee.
When he had grown to be a man,
(Or to man's size, I should have said)
He married Lizzie Jane Beehan,
A tall, spare lass, with hair of red.
Those knowing well her style and will,
Would say—"Just made for Bill Brown's Bill."

They eked along the usual way.
Raised enough to keep the soul
And body "friends" as one might say,
And never went "into the hole."
Then, babies came as time went by—
Tom, and Sal. and Cy. and Nell,
And strange to say—I can't tell why—
They got along about as well,
As those who have just one or two;
With more they'd not know what to do.

Then just about the time, one fall,
That Bill and Liz. (as they were known)
Were "figerrin", winter clothes for all,
(And some of the kids even right-smart grown)
The "oil men" came their section through,
A leasing land and building rigs,
And drilling holes—a sight to view—
All great big fellows—fat as pigs;
Just spending money left and right,
And working two turns—day and night.

Well, Bill's land laid plunk on the line,
(The "forty-five degree," you know)
And peaks once decked with scrubby pine
And laurel, now were seen to glow
With leaping gas-lights everywhere—
Petroleum gushed from evry hole;
Pipe-lines straddled here and there—
Every gulley—every knoll,
Seemed waiting tapping by the drill,
And gushed the money out for Bill.

Now, Croesus wasn't one, two, three,
With William Alexander Brown,
(And to the last name plussed an "e"),
When he moved in to Splendidtown.
His residence, the brown-stone kind;
The best on old Fifth Avenue.
His horses and his autos—mind—
Imported. How does this hit you?
No more 'twas Bill or Brown, we'll see;
He spelled it—so's to sound Brown-e.

You should have seen Elizabeth;
(That's Bill's red-headed Liz. of yore)
All diked out 'till she'd take your breath,
A wearing spool-heeled shoes. And more
Dog-goned silks. Peach-basket hats,
Directly "fetched" from gay Paree;
Her hair rolled up on silken rats;
Her gold-rimmed glasses helped her see.
The thing that "most nigh" broke her heart,
Was the cheap "daub" used in works of art.

Then Tom, and Cy. (their full names now)
In patent leathers—flowered socks—
Panamas—and how they'd go
About in suits, with flowing frocks.
Diamond studs and finger rings;
Walking sticks of varied kind;
And when they'd tend those full-dress things
They'd wear the best that they could find;
Then tell the other guests thereat—
Exact cost on this and that.

Nell left her name stay just the same,
But Sal. spelled her's *Sarena* now,
Both of whom went slightly lame,
A wearing city styles. Somehow
The pavements had an upward trend;
Street cars seemed to block their road,
And when they'd walk they'd twist and bend
As if they lugged a heavy load.

They held their necks, as in a yoke.
They worked hard to get "city broke."

Their appetites transformed the same
  As did their clothes and real-estate.
They never heard of such a name
  As pork and beans—corn-pone; nor ate
Such horrid stuff as "country" ham,
  Or mustard greens, or pumpkin pie;
Boiled cabbage—elderberry jam;
  Had ne'er seen corn nor oats nor rye.
In fact the Brown of Billingslea,
Was just plain Brown, and not Brown-e.

Their stomachs now demanded steak—
  The porterhouse, and very thick;
Small soft-shells and angel cake,
  And ice-cream—surely—by the brick;
Quail-on-toast and canvas-backs,
  With terrapin cooked extra plain;
They loved to hear uncorking cracks,
  Of old Mumms "Extra Dry" champagne.
And when they went to bed at night,
'Twas oft reported—"pretty tight."

William played "the races" some,
  And gave the "bank" a little play;
Drew to "fills" and hit old Mumm;
  Considered "roulette" rather gay.
The boys both had great faith in "Dad"
  And took a whirl at this and that,
With 'bout the luck the daddy had,
  In playing other games—whereat,
The man who dealt or "made the book,"
Was always first to "have a look."

The women went to "Floridy,"
  When wintry breezes came their way;
And when the summer's sun they'd see,
  They'd check their stuff towards Hudson Bay.
Europe and the Holy Lands,

"Jamaicy," "Cuby," Mexico,
Were theirs to see, at their demands—
In fact, most always on the go.
This little sphere was "far too wee,"
For these folks Brown—No, no, Brown-e.

The pace they set was far too fast,
In fact, 'tis called the "pace that kills."
Their many thousands couldn't last—
Soon, well shrunk—from doctor's bills;
Trips abroad and betting high
And wrong—soon served to tell the tale;
But we'll now tell it with a sigh —
All things, once theirs was marked—"For Sale."
We heard the auctioneer's deep shout;
They stopped—when nature too, played out.

And one by one they passed away,
Most by the Indigestion route;
Excepting William—sad to say—
He died afflicted with the gout.
The "sharks" who'd pulled for their last cent,
(Most liberal fellows—all the while)
Placed o'er their graves, a monument,
Dome-capped and the "latest style."
Then some wag chiseled—neath the dome—
"The bunch enclosed have traveled some."

"DIED IN HIS CELL"

Trundling along with no fixed destination;
Eyes glancing hither and thither to see
One who will add to his inebriation—
By greeting him—"Come and have something on me."
But, my, how far spaced are the men of this mind,
Uuless he'd, perchance, meet with one of his kind.
The one of his kind who had held out his hand,
To one who in charity met his demand.

Then, to the bar, where he'll quaff his potations—
Potations that drive him down, down in the scale;
Until the small stock for "spot cash" liquidations
Is gone—when the sign is shown—"Cash with each sale."
Then, to the street, full to brimming with rum
He hies—while the passers-by ask—"Who's the bum?"
The street is his heritage. No place to go.
No roof to protect from the frost and the snow.

Day after day, how he courts this condition!
Poor slave of Bacchus! Our heart goes to you!
Some give him blame for his blasted ambition;
But oh, how far distant this saying's from true.
They give him all blame—in a way 'tis the truth—
Had he known well his temperament on from his youth.
But now, he's a slave and does gladly obey,
When ever his master in revels holds sway.

He sees naught but clouds of the darkest formations—
No silver lining. No bright morning's ray
Of hope e'er dispels his morose lamentations;
He lives where it's all endless night, and no day.
Why leave him alone in his night of despair?
Why quicken your step, through his frequented square?
Let's stop and say—"Billy, we've talked it all o'er;
We'll straighten you up—back to manhood once more."

Don't wait 'till the fellow in blue, and commissioned
To do, well his duty (?) swoops down "on the foe,"

And jails him; where, in his weak way he's petitioned
For "one little drink," to be met with a "No!"
"One little drink!" Oh, how often 'tis said!
'Twas needed. Refused. In the morning—
"Found dead."
"Died in his cell," say the newspapers, cold,
From "Alcoholism"—the coroner told.

Some one's to blame for this awful decision—
The coroner's "Alcoholism." We'll tell
It the way we are taught without taunt or derision
Some one's to blame for this—"Died in his cell."
God gave to all—understanding; free will—
And he gave us an age of intelligence—still
We assist this poor soul in consignment to Hell—
The Great Judge well knows why he—"Died in his cell."

THE JOINER

We've seen him, when a youngster,
Somewhat past the "child in arms,"
Sizing up the "big ones,"
With their rings and pins and charms;
And questioning the wearers,
Just how old he'd have to be,
'Fore he could join the order
To a limitless degree.
Then the cost of 'nitiation,
With price of charms and rings;
Then if the goat was f'rocious—
And a hundred dif'rent things.
His thoughts by day—his dreams by night,
Were of those plumed chapeaus
With epauletted uniforms
And patent leather shoes.
And banquets, where the brothers are
Ensconced by banks of flowers,
Where "after dinner" speakers talk
'Till in the wee sma' hours.

Where quail-on-toast and terrapin,
With Mumm's old "Extra Dry,"
Are munched and gulped so recklessly—
Where life's one lullaby.

* * * * *

And oh, how slow these first years passed—
It seemed an awful span—
Betwixt his youth and "Twenty-one,"
When he would be a man—
Then join the "Secret orders,"
And swear 'till black and blue,
What e'er his "brother" joiner did
To try and help him through.

* * * * *

The time arrives—he's now a MAN;
His teens are in the past.
He fills out applications
For admission, thick and fast,
And 'fore his twenty-second year
Was his to celebrate,
He'd joined the X-T-S's,
And the "Tribe of Applegate"—
The "Order of Orang-utan"—
The "Mystic Guild of Peth"—
The "Shrine of Timbuctoozer"—
And the "Order of No Death"—
The "Brotherhood of Absolom"—
The "Council of Salome"—
The "Wigwam of Wampoozer"—
The "Knights of Ancient Rome"—
The "Tams of Tam o' Shanter"—
The "Yams of Yamarat"—
The "Tent of old Baluchistan"—
And the "Arks of Arrarat."
Then a dozen like the "Shiners"—
The "Gomullians"—for the fun—
Then wore so many emblems—
In the aggregate—a ton.

The countersigns and passwords,
  And the grips the fellows knew,
Fixed him to be a "brother"
  To the Irish, French and Jew.
He could "flag" the Czar of Russia—
  Give the grip to Uncle Sam—
Hob-a-nob with Turkey's Sultan,
  And give signs at Amsterdam.
He'd be right at home in Guinea
  Or out with the Seminole—
Give the frozen stare to Cook or
  Captain Peary at the Pole—
In fact, his work was finished—
  Life to him was one sweet song,
As there wasn't any "brother"
  But who'd see he got along.

* * * * *

Of course he held an office
  In most every lodge he'd join;
From the "Wielder of Authority"
  To "Grabber of the Coin."
He was the "Main Gazabo"
  In the "Portals of the Platte;"
Yet served as "Spittoon cleaner"
  In the "Lords of Ballarat."
And he had so many uniforms—
  I'd gamble my last cent—
If the country needed soldiers,
  To equip a regiment.

* * * * *

And my, the grief exemplified
  When some dear brother'd die;
Was last to leave from all the wakes
  And always first to cry.
And it goes without a question,
  The pall-bearer's lot was his—
With solemn tread—'longside the hearse—
  He understood the biz.
For when he donned that suit of black,

And gloves of snowy white,
With tinseled sash down o'er his breast,
His garb was set, just right.
The sad and sombre fun'ral notes
Sang requiems to him,
And he'd offer consolations
To bereaved ones with a vim.

* * * * *

'Course his work was in the lodge room,
When his daily toil was o'er,
And there scarcely was a morning
He'd roll in 'till three or four.
Until fin'ly his employers
(Who wore no pin at all)
Were compelled to give this "joiner"
Well—a most ferocious call.
They told him "from the shoulder,"
That his work was "on the bum;"
That his sleepy-like condition
Would "stand remedying some."
They'd give him just a fortnight
To inaugurate a change;
Then, if none, to seek seclusion
In the "Tribemen of the Range."
But he wouldn't heed the warning—
When the fortnight came and went—
His improvement—just the opposite
A sixty-five per cent.
So they told him his position
Was no longer filled by him,
And to pack his small belongings
And hike off with lithest limb.
So he proudly abdicated,
As he knew that "Brother" Phelps
Of the "Tent of old Baluchistan"
Would "humble those chill whelps"
Who had so far forgotten
That his "brothers" would condemn
Any jab at "order etiquette"—

In fact, would boycott them.
But "Brother" Phelps was busy,
So "deferred 'till later on;"
Yet, informing him so naively,
That he'd "sift it pro and con."
But Pro seemed on vacation
And Con was "on the con."
And "Brother" Phelps deferring
Until "sometime—later on."
Then he sought out other "brothers,"
And asked them to try their hand—
But these other "brothers" never
Seemed the "parties in command."
Until—at last—a *brother,*
The real thing—named Bob,
Informed him like a brother should,
To go and hunt a job.
And, e'en though quite reluctant,
In the fact that he'd been stuck,
He started out, and got a job—
A-peddling "garden truck."
Still kept his emblems on him,
As "brother" Thus and So,
Would buy in great abundance
"Just because it's *me,* you know."
But "Brother" Thus was working,
And "Brother" So—the same,
And the women did the buying
And were on to every game
That was "worked" by "green goods" venders;
And when he'd speak about
Their husbands as his "brothers,"
They'd freeze the fellow out.
They'd add, they thought him looney,
From the jewelry he wore;
And they'd put it—unbecoming
'Round a common produce store.
And when he would convince them
That, really and true,
He was the husband's "brother"
In the "Council of Bazoo,"

They'd impart the information
  That they bought from "Brother" Klees,
Who belonged to the same council
  But he'd twenty more degrees.
Then others would inform him, that
  They wouldn't buy from him,
As they bought from "Brother" Williams
  Of the "Order of Zim-Zim."
Now this was said in satire
  (As he found out later on).
There was no such order
  And the women knew a "fawn."
At length he doffed his jewelry,
  One emblem at a time,
And we understood he sold them,
  Some as low down as a dime.
And as he dropped the emblems
  He dropped the orders too;
As each one cost so much per month,
  And "dues" were overdue.
And each "mercenary grafter"
  (As he'd learned to call the whole)
Could "carry him no longer,"
  So had "struck him from the roll."

* * * * * *

Now, whate'er's his occupation,
  Or where'e'er his whereabouts,
The last we heard of "Joiner"—
  He had joined the "Down and Outs."

JUST ODD—THAT'S ALL

She wasn't like the other girls, it seems;
Never romanced; never lived in dreams;
  Never soared on wings of love
  To dizzy heights, far, far above
  Those so non-sentimental.
She never seemed to worry 'bout the boys;
Yet still, she didn't hold them merely toys;

Enjoyed them well in unison;
But for a special steady one
She never cared a continental—
That is, if all she says is really true;
But I could never think that way—could you?

She told me for the truth, she ne'er was kissed,
('Tween you and me she don't know what she's missed.)
Never held a hand, you know;
Nor whispered soft—when lights were low;
Nor hemmed and hawed at parting.
She always made him leave at stroke of ten.
(Of course that fellow ne'er came back again.)
Her father never asked at "One"—
"My daughter, is that young man gone?"
Never hit by Cupid's darting.
She'd tell this story, time and time again:
The women merely smiled—just like the men.

What always seemed to me a mystery, at least,
The novels of her choice would always fairly feast
On just the gushiest of love,
Where both are courting death to prove
Their love for one or other.
The songs she'd sing were all—"My darling heart,"
"My precious one," "My life," "From you I cannot part,"
Another one she'd sing with joy
Was of—"My sweetest soldier boy"—
She never sang of brother,
Or did she sing the ones wherein the name
Of father, mother, sister held the slightest claim.

The other girls, her chums, while they would never say
Just how they'd entertain when their beaux came their way;
They seemed to get along first rate;
The beau, so often, stayed quite late,
E'en then, at parting, tarried.
And always longed and longed the night to come

When he will start with candy-chewing-gum:
Then how his brimming love he'll tell
To his own loving brown-eyed belle—
(These ones are happy—marrie
They've wed the one whom they'd caressed, and knew
They'd never lack for love, when love was due.

Let's see, just now, milady of the queerest ways,
Is past the two-score mark by many, many days.
Companions of the former times
Are wed, or gone to other climes.
And, truly, it's amusing
To see her try and skip the light fantastic toe,
Just like she did a one-fifth century ago,
And prating, why her friend's big boys
Don't help participate in her enjoys
When partners they are choosing.
She has a beau—'bout sixty—and I hear they're to be "tied"—
And I'll bet she carries orange blossoms up the aisle—a bride.

THE RHYMSTER'S SOLILOQUY

Seated at my window casement,
Five high stories from the basement,
Where my rent is so in keeping
With the pittances I'm paid;
In the quaintest little hall-room,
Where indeed there's not at all room,
For a steamer trunk—if I'd one—
(And a hundred in the shade)—
Here I sit and pen effusions,
Some real wounds, and some contusions,
And some more just mere abrasions—
Still I get them to the press;
Who, in turn, extend their greetings,
Never asking 'bout my eatings,

Whether quail on toast or sandwich,
More the latter they must guess.
Never talk of winter suitings,
Nor the latest style in bootings;
Never mention that my headgear's
Of the style of sixty-nine;
Never seem to think or mention,
That my whiskers need attention—
Though they always give that famous
Salutation, "Looking fine."
Never note my hair's disheveled,
Nor that my shirt front is "deviled,"
Never hinting that my collar
Has been worn by larger men,
Never whisper—"Come and join me,"
Lest perhaps they might purloin me;
But so blandly hand out comment
To me time and time again.
Tell me how I'm "ever pleasant,"
"Bubbling over," "effervescent,"
Tell me that the time is coming
When the literary world,
Will, in its wild speed, be checking,
And my long lost grave be decking
With the choicest of its flowers—
And, my fame, to winds unfurled.
Tell me of my work's transplendence;
How my lineal descendants
Centuries to come, will prize me,
As the greatest in their line—
How they'll color, O, so hueish;
Trace their blood to royal bluish;
Speak of me as their forefather—
("That great-great-grand-dad of mine")
How they'll pen my bio-graphy;
How they'll drive the artists daffy,
Drawing on their 'maginations
My bleak attic to produce—
With its broken chair and table,
And nice oats-straw from the stable,

Which made up the regimentals
  Of my squalid calaboose.
How my likeness they'll have painted,
With its features truly sainted;
Quill in hand and gazing fondly
  On prized volumes of my lore.
With a collar high and stately—
(Not the kind I'm wearing lately),
And, in fact, I know they'll dress me
  Up in clothes I never wore.
Men like Byron, Burns—unswerving—
Shakespeare, Shelley, Bryant, Irving,
Goldsmith, Moore and *our* Longfellow,
  'Ll rue they ever lived to die.
Kiser, Day and Whitcomb Riley,
Montague we prize so highly,
Giligan and "Cape Cod" Lincoln,
  To the "tall uncut" must hie.
Even those acknowledged sages,
Who've been quoted age on ages
For their truthful emanations—
  Surely must evacuate
All their fortes—no small concession—
But *mine* put *me* in possession,
There to hold the situation,
  With no thought to abdicate.
But for all these contributions,
Fruit of crafty evolutions,
I'll take Old Time by the forelock
  And return—"sincerest thanks"—
And for those that have been handed
Me (in a condition stranded),
I'll pretend their comments paid me,
  While I'd rather 've had the francs.
So I say—"Congratulators,
Of my bursts—and dissipators,
In the muses, merely rythmic,
  Let me one request provide—
Try and add a small "substantial"

In a way I'll call "financial,"
Just to stimulate my system
'Till I hit the "Great Divide."

WHEN SHE WENT TO MARKET IN 1889

I've seen her with her basket,
And I knew her, market bound;
Where she'd buy chickens by the bunch
And sweetmeats by the pound;
Celery—potatoes;
Roasts and stews and fries;
Hunks of cheese—doughnuts
And a half a dozen pies;
Fruits—Bermuda onions—
All the good things in her way;
And always topped the basket out
With a fifty cent bouquet.
And that bouquet about the size
Of the "Merry Widow" hat;
But what she bought would be no good
Unless on top it sat.
(You know she run a boarding-house,
Down by the Aetna Mill;
She charged her guests, fifteen per month
And gave them all their fill).
I've watched her strain to lug the load—
But now I have to laugh,
When I look back on what it cost—
Two dollars and a half.
(And I've seen her, every Sunday,
On her way from early Mass;
In silks and sat's and picture hats;
She'd jingle as she'd pass).

* * *

(*As she goes to market in* 1909).

* * *

I met her, bless you, yesterday,
She looked about the same;

The loads she lugged when things were cheap
Had set her slightly lame.
Her basket—not the former one,
Reduced to one-fourth size,
It held a dollar's worth of beans—
Four dollars' worth of fries;
A half pound of liver-wurst;
Bologna—'bout a yard;
About fifteen potatoes,
And two dollars' worth of lard;
A chicken of the rooster ilk
All battle-scarred and thin;
But no nice fruit or celery
Or "luxuries" were in;
A loaf of bread—banana size—
Was perched behind her ear;
She had to cut her onions out—
Because they were so dear.
A body-guard went with her,
To protect her treasures 'till,
She'd reach her two-roomed shanty
In the alley by the mill.
"Her" boarding-house is now a flat
And rents for fifty per—
But what it is or what it was
Is no concern to her.
She's plenty time to go to Mass,
But doesn't dress as fine;
I think the clothes she wears are those
She wore in Eighty-nine.

JOHN DOWNEY—DRUMMER—EDITOR

There wasn't any doubt about John's high regard
for truth;
The least deflection from it always grated on him
so;
Why even from his youngest days—when reckoned
as a youth
What e'er he said—that's what it was—or else
he didn't know.

His eyes were big and brown and bright, as some say "slightly popped;"
And, as the poet tells us, were true "windows of the soul;"
So when he spoke the very truth from out him fairly cropped,
And when he told his story (if he knew it) it was whole.

A quiet sort of fellow—even when he went to school;
His teacher always said that what "John Downey said was true."
It seemed to him innate-like to be no one's slave or tool;
A very good idea for a youngster to cling to.

So thus he grew, and when his course at public school was done,
And shifting for himself was now to him, reality,
He got a job first place he went—a genuine good one—
A travelling through the country for a wholesale grocery.

And when he said his "cheese was mild" and that his "prunes were prunes;"
That his beans were "New York hand-picked" instead of "Michigan's."
His peaches "Californias," his peas the "Early Junes,"
And all his air-tight goods were packed in "best of lacquered cans."

And then again if any one would want a "second grade,"
He knew what he had purchased—when John explained the cost,
He'd never stand for kicking when the bargain once was made,
And if it ever came to law—the other fellow lost.

His customers would never doubt a single word
he said,
And all seemed sort o' gloomy when the word
passed up and down,
That, being "right well educated" and besides "well
read,"
He was asked to run the "Weekly Gossip" up
at Gabbletown.

Now, he was the reporter and the editor-in-chief;
Typo and the "devil," and in fact the whole
blamed show;
His "locals" would be pointed-like, his "personals"
be brief;
He'd strike square from the shoulder, with a
well-directed blow.

And—Heavens! when "The Gossip"—with the
drummer-editor,
Made its first appearance in the streets of Gab-
bletown;
A lot of those, once humored, simply wondered
where they were,
As editor John Downey turned "The Gossip"
upside down.

(*The issue*)

First, came his editorial—"To whom it may con-
cern"—
"I'm going to run this paper with a motto—
'Truths and Facts'—
And what you read will be correct as person'ly I'll
learn,
As positively truthful as your 'Sunday leaflet
Tracts.'

"Tales far-fetched and pictured up in colors not
their own,
Will stand a heavy censoring before I run the
same;

And when you read your pedigree, full and not
half-blown,
If it hurts, no fault of mine, just carry home the
blame."

(*Locals and Comments*)

"Will Jones and Sarah Robinson were married
Sunday night,
Will got a homely maiden and she, a lazy cuss;
And the noise they made about the thing you'd think
Bill was alright,
And that Sarah was a beauty from the big
amount of fuss.

"The 'Busy Six' met Sunday, at the home of Phoebe
Plyes,
Where they aired the latest scandals, and brought
the old to life,
And tore the belles to pieces for their wearing latest
styles,
Then poured hot-shot to every man, and likewise,
to his wife.

"Course everyone were sinners of the very deep-
est dye,
Except the six who gathered for their week's dis-
gorging act;
E'en they in turn departing, after saying 'fond'
good-bye—
The others still remaining, would score them,
that's a fact.

"Dr. Allen's sermon was a gem (?) of purest
punk.
Jim McDonald died last night at seven-thirty-
two.
The doctors say 'twas heart disease, but we know
Jim was drunk,
And they'll plant him Tuesday morning where
the polk and burdocks grew.

"His loss (?) was everybody's gain, as Jim was so n. g.
Of course, when they looked on him, dead, they all would say 'too bad,'
And proffer, from the 'bottom of their hearts'—their 'sympathy,'
To his relations, when 'twas plain to see they all were glad.

"The Elliotts have moved across the street from Taylor's folks;
And neither think the other is exactly with them classed;
They've called each other 'new-rich,' 'ignoramuses' and 'blokes,'
They've all 'retired' from business (selling whiskey in the past).

"The teachers in the Sunday-school—James Williams and John Frew,
Are targets for the critics, 'cause they 'smoke and chew a bit,'
And neither cares who knows it—real outspoken—these same two,
When *these* faults are their *only* ones—pray, who are better fit?"

You should have seen the populace—conversing here and there;
Why folks that hadn't talked for years were now on best of terms;
In fact, the drummer-editor, had made the bunch "play fair,"
And caused the town to be possessed of latest styles in "squirms."

They all then got together and discussed the things he said—
The women were for hanging to the closest apple tree;

But when Samantha Carr got up and told the things *she* read,
Were to her "best of jedgment, jest exactly as they be."

It sort o' set them thinking and they each acknowledged there,
That while the stuff was all correct, and printed in the rough,
They'd call and tell friend Downey to "plug on fair and square,"
But while they're changing "systems" not to be too *cussed* tough.

Now, things are all harmonious in dear old Gabbletown;
Each minds his special business and leaves the rest alone;
With John the present Mayor, where he "does all things up brown,"
And he's spoken of for Congress for they know he'd "hold his own."

HEZ HILEY

Hez. was the only child his parents ever had;
And by the way the old folks put it down
In discussing the boy, his parents best be glad,
For every one of them said he was the ugliest near the town.
They pictured him, as all head and feet, and these two
Extremes were the whole talk through the neighborhood
For the longest time. Then even when *we* saw him too,
We knew the old folk's judgment was surely good.
His folks seemed to realize the case the same
As all the others; for when they'd bring him in

To town or into company either, a sort of flame
Lit up their faces, that is when they'd first begin
To say "this is our baby," (a sort of proudish deed
For most other parents to do) but Hez. he
Was so all-fired awkward looking with his head
And feet so far out of kilter, and his legs and neck so wee,
Then the way he grew was scandalous. I'll declare
If you'd seen him this Saturday and not again 'till next,
You'd most believe he'd gone up half a foot in the air;
And both extremes grew in the same proportion, I expect.
And then his name—Hez.—with Hiram following it—
In honor of his two grand-parents on his *mother's* side.
I've heard folks say in talking of his name that "they'd a fit"
If they had been his father to have the name set aside.
Then besides his name and looks, his heritage was such,
That it made him just the poorest boy in all the country 'round;
His parents held the deed for their small farm, which wasn't much,
And besides there wa'n't an acre that you'd reckon on tilling ground.
His mother never was too well from the day poor Hez was born,
And he seemed to 'preciate the fact and helped her with her work—
Washing dishes, milking. Take a turn at hoeing corn—
Any task assigned him he was never known to shirk.

Just seemed to be *so* happy when the evening's work was done,
When mother, father and himself, before the backlogs glare,
Would while away the evening 'till retiring time would come—
Happy in his own mind's eye if he had done his share.
I'll ne'er forget the first day our friend Hez. dug out to school;
His clothes were awful shabby—his pants were inches short
And set half-way on his boot legs—when standing, as a rule;
Then when he'd sit down all the way you'd hear the scholars snort;
For them pants legs'd climb plumb off the tops of them boot-legs,
And showed that underneath them there wasn't nothing more,
Than just Hez and what they'd always mention as his "pegs;"
Which were so thin you'd wonder how they'd hold him up—I'm "shore."
'Course other boys more fortunate, when their trousers would get thin,
Or p'rhaps'd get a tearing—or cleaning to be done,
They'd always use their Sunday ones 'till they got fixed again;
But Hez. was never in this class—he only had the one,
And, I don't know how *true* it is, but often I've heard said,
That, be it from a mishap, or just ordinary wear,
When *his* pants needed fixing—he'd have to go to bed,
Or sit up if he'd rather—as he only had one pair.

His coat was what they called those days a wammus and I'd guess
It lacked about three inches meeting with his pants on top;
Which gave the wintry winds a chance to move from east to west,
And hit his spinal column where the chills go flip-te-flop.
The wammus sleeves were far too short themselves, and when
He'd want to wipe his nose, like other boys, upon his sleeve,
He'd have to use his shirt instead and *his* shirt sleeves just then,
Were nigh as short or shorter than his wammus sleeves I b'lieve.
His hat was one his father'd worn ten seasons (in and out)
Though black at the beginning 'twas a lemon-color now,
And I would say, in size, an *eight* or *nine* or thereabout;
Of course 'twas stretched consid'rable to straddle Hez.'s brow.
His boots were made to order, in size I'd say "thirteen;"
Made by our town shoe-maker—'long late in the fall;
And cut to fullest measure when the hide was fresh and green;
They say, if not cut this way, he'd ne'er get a fit at all.
And, so far, this was Hez. I say, and not one whit far-fetched;
No wonder that the youngsters who were with him at the school,
Would never censure any one or think conclusions stretched,
Where strangers, would invari'bly, point to him as a fool.

His boy companions were *so* few and girls, why none at all;
And when the school would "recess" or would "noon" to play and eat,
He'd do his share of eating, but for kissing plays and ball,
And plays for children of his years—he usu'ly kept his seat.
And so it was. Poor Hez. 'd sit and study long and hard;
So when the time for "lessons" came he always knew them well;
And when they'd offer prizes he'd pull down first reward.
It beat the deuce the way he'd spout the grammar; and'd spell
The hardest words with perfect ease. Arithmetic to him
Was easier than A. B. C.'s. And history was like eating pie.
Geography was fun. In penmanship he'd always trim
His teacher. And the trustees they decided, by and by,
That may be Hez. could teach, and 'twasn't worth the while
To send off to the county seat, and bring in foreigners,
When he would answer just as well, though not so much for style,
As what they'd want was learning with less *"furbelows* and *furs."*
And so that fall Hez. tried his luck and got a "Number One;"
Then came right back and got the school where oft he'd caused a laugh;
And you can take my word or not, from first day he begun,
They found he was the smartest teacher e'er they'd had by half.

And so it went. In summer months he went to Normal school,
Then teach all through the winter—then away again—you see.
And all reports from Hezekiah were that he was *no fool;*
First thing we knew, he wound up in the University,
And studied law. He went right through a-sailing—so they say;
Got B. A.'s, LL. D's and all handles that they had;
Hung out his shingle—in "gold leaf"—the usual lawyers way;
And then what? Came right home to his old mother and his dad,
And had them sell their little "patch," and took them into town;
Wherein they'd have some comfort in their now declining days.
By George! It was miraculous the way he gained renown,
By winning cases right and left in his peculiar ways.
You'd see all sorts of headlines in the papers far and wide—
Like—"Hezekiah Hiley wins another famous case."
"The county is in mourning—our old prosecutor died—
Young Hezekiah Hiley is selected in his place."
"The widow Stuart's homestead was marked for 'Sheriff's Sale.'
"Prosecutor Hiley buys before the 'sale is cried,' "
(And just to add a little tinge of romance to my tale,
He *deeds* it to the widow and weds her girl beside).
E'en though he wed a " 'ristocrat" it made no change in *him,*

Was just the same "plain gentleman"—the village paper says;
Knew all his own age well enough to call them "Sue" and "Jim,"
And those of elder years were held in due respect by Hez.
So time went on as Old Time will; next, in convention halls,
We find our Hezekiah in a nominating speech;
Singing out the praises of his friend who'd "make the walls
Of the lower house of Congress fairly writhe and groan and screech,
Reechoing his sentiments when once upon the floor"—
But 'ere he had concluded someone shouted—"Hiley 'll do!"
'Twas "Hiley"—"Hiley"—"Hiley"—"We had thought of you before"—
When the fellow he'd intended, yelled to Hiley—"Guess it's you."
And so it was—by acclamation—Hiley got the call;
Then started in campaigning like most every thing he'd done;
And when the votes were counted in November—following fall,
The victory—most unanimous—and Hezekiah won.
But 'fore election when he'd drifted back to childhood days,
That is, when he was speaking back where he was born and bred;
Why everybody welcomed him and sung and sung his praise;
And never once alluded to his awful feet and head.
That thinnish frame had rounded big— his "pipe-stems" he'd filled out,
His suit was of the latest cut—his hat a silken tile—

That homely face was hidden since his whiskers had grown out,
All trimmed up *a la Vandyke,* of the last Parisian style.
And all the boys and all the girls who went to school with him,
Were given seats of honor near the center of the stand;
The boys (now men) would all recall the days "when Hez. was slim,"
And every time he scored a point they gave him the glad hand.
The girls (now women) cheered and cheered—their handkerchiefs waved high,
When Hezekiah's eloquence was at its highest tide;
They chatted in between acts—"couldn't see the reason why,
He didn't come back home 'fore he decided on a bride."

* * * *

And now he's in the Senate—a member so we see
Of the principal committee—and the diplomatic corps.
No more 'tis Hez. or Hezzy, or Hiram or Hi-ley,
'Tis the *Honorable* Hezekiah Hiley—evermore.

FARMISH REMINISCING

Along about September when the breeze begins to turn,
To the one so sort o' soothin' from the one inclined to burn;
When the leaves are turning yellow, that a fortnight since were green,
And they're blown in all directions of the compass, 'twill be seen;
When your cotton socks and underwear assume a frigid pose,

An' your thoughts are of the wardrobe which contains your winter clothes;
When Miss Katydid sings tenor, 'n Mister Frog doles out the bass,
An' Old Man Cricket has his choir to trail in Katy's pace;
When the window trimmer's showin' off his furs, so fine and warm—
'Tis then my thoughts drift backward—to the days upon the farm.
Dear old farm! Oh, how we've missed you, with all your joys and cares;
(With the neighbor renter makin' more a'workin' on the shares)
You were such a lovely asset when the winter we'd endured,
An' all the crops had "come in" fine an' thoroughly matured.
When our cousins from the city an' their friends in groups 'd come
To tell us funny tales, an' eat us out of house an' home.
How they'd ride old "Bess" and "Billy," when we knew they needed rest;
We plugin' 'round in homespun, and them "fixed up their best."
How they'd tell us of their humdrum life in city's smoke and grime,
An' gettin' us to thinkin' they'd like farm life all the time.
An' the girls a-makin' "goo-goos," an' lookin' pert and cute,
While waitin' for a letter from the town of smoke an' soot;
Which was always "from a cousin" or a "dear old aunt of theirs,"
A-tellin' them "to be good girls an' not forget their prayers."
(Course these "cousins" were *realities* to us in days of yore,

But since we're in the town, we don't believe it any more.)
But anyhow, they boarded 'till Jack Frost came on to stay
An' then, so like the Arab, packed their duds an' stole away;
A-leavin' us to battle with the snow an' everything—
Through four or five long dreary months to first approach of Spring.
Oh, the Spring! in those dear hallowed days, was what I'd dread the most,
To hear the old folks talk of all the work, when winter's frost
Had left the ground in fettle, for the ploughshare and the hoe;
And I'd be told in language plain of "hoein' my own row."
When I'd help to hitch old "Bessie" up, with "Billy" by her side,
(The former one my mother rode, the latter father'd ride
When they'd go to church on Sundays)—but no happy thoughts came now,
'Tis all one stern reality—a-follerin' the plow!
I can see myself a-tacklin' that "eight acre field of ours,"
Which was all askew and twisted from the drenching spring time showers.
And I wish I had a snapshot of them handlebars an' me,
With that cussed team a-pullin' "Haw," an' me a-yellin' "Gee."
Of course, you'll wonder why I didn't use the lines instead
Of yellin' at them horses 'till I nearly lost my head;
The reason would be simple if the land you once could see,
As it stood in all its glory at a sixty-two degree.
When you'd plow'd two weeks on slants like these, then hit a level place,

You'd go sort o' semi-circlin' with your knees agin your face;
And your head, would be top-heavy and your eyes not workin' right,
An' your countenance givin' every sign of spoilin' for a fight;
An' to those not real familiar with this fellow when he's "riled,"
Will do quite well to look "yan" way if they don't want their faces "spiled."
You've seen him—this same character—you folks right here in town,
With one pants leg on his boot strap, an' the other half way down;
An' as he comes "a-trapsein" up or down the avenue,
If you don't do some side-steppin', he will run plunk into you.
You'll wonder how he ever cultivated such a stride,
But see his early battle grounds you'll very soon decide.
And plowin' wa'nt the only thing to make you 'skew about;
There was pitchin' hay on hillsides, an' grubbin' saplin's out;
When you'd have to hold on like grim death while strikin' for the roots,
As the leaves had done the smoothin' act upon your cowhide boots.
There was cradlein' an' rakin' an' a-bindin' up the sheaves;
A-burnin' brush an' log-heaps an' a-pilin' up the leaves;
Maulin' rails an' sawin' lengths an' then a-buildin' fence,
An' a thousand incidental chores with no way to condense.
There was plantin' corn an' cuttin' it, an' shuckin' by the peck,
An' how we did enjoy it, when the blades'd gash our neck,

Just when the sweat was rollin' down beneath our drillin' pants—
'Till we'd lost all thoughts of terror for the doctor's well-honed lance.
There was "thrashin' " an' the wise ones at the soft jobs took a whack,
While we piled the straw so shapely an' the chaff piled down our back.
There was mowin' 'long in August, when the sun was at its best,
An' sweet memories still linger 'round them "yaller-jackets' " nests,
As the little striped devils'd attack you 'fore an' aft,
A-huntin' out some special place in which to sink their gaft.
There was cuttin' filth in due time when the crops were gathered in,
An' the measly stuff cut this year'd be up next year again.
There was feedin' stock an' milkin' when the winds'd howl an' blow
An' Fehrenheit a-sayin'—"Boys, she's twenty-two below."
There was gettin' in the winter's wood, an' choppin' it, you bet,
An' tackin' shingles here an' there to keep from gettin' wet.
There was pickin' of the apples, an' a-makin' cider too,
An' this cider was for drinkin' when fermentin' would be through;
But just about the time it got to tastin' as its best
They'd start the *fall revival* an' the preacher'd do the rest,
By tellin' all the brethren of the drunkard's awful plight,
An' you have to act real sneakin' when you git about half tight,
An' on your own hard cider, too, inclined to make you sing

Or dance or yell or want to fight without your "twelve-foot ring."
An' that was one objection to their teachin' to begin,
As they seemed to think that drinkin' was the one an' chiefest sin.
Instead of sayin' "take a bit your tired brain to warm,
An' help forget those irksome days encountered on the farm."
Of course, we had our good times, too, along with all the bad,
But separated far enough to not be too long glad.
There was huskin' frolics, grubbins an' house raisin's now and then;
The husky boys would do the work which well became the men.
But of course the men were "old-like"—thirty, to thirty-eight—
An' understood the dodgin' of the heavy work first rate,
With excuses of the "roomatiz," the "vertigo" and so—
Which lasted them till Gabriel blew his horn for them to go,
Along about the four-score mark, and then they'd make the kick,
That never in their whole blamed life had they been "leastwise sick."
But usu'ly when Gabriel called upon these joke-smiths right,
We'd have a first class wake along about the follerin' night;
Sometimes maybe two nights—if we'd like the one that's gone,
And then, of course, the funeral, which we all enjoyed, came on.
These two night wakes along in winter time were just the style,
But they buried in the summer time before they'd start to "spile."

Another thing enjoyable was when us "young 'ens"
'd go
And gather at some neighbor's who would give
us half a show—
When we'd cut loose in old quadrilles and polkies
and such pranks,
Then get in turn a lecture from those real religious (?) cranks.
I'll not forget "bean-stringin's" an' "apple-pealin's"
too;
At which we'd work just like Old Nick to get the
business through—
Then play at "Old King William," "Post Office,"
"Blind Man's buff,"
An' get the awf'lest bunch of love, 'at surely was
the stuff.
Of course the girls wa'nt triggled up much in frills
o' furbelows,
But Lordy! How they'd kiss the boys—especially
their beaux.
'Twas natural for them to feign a backwardness
right there,
But when they'd settle down to biz—the kiss was
on the square.
And us boys, too, though in our best, were never
Beau-Brum-Mell,
But figure just how good we felt, when our sweethearts would tell
Us that it wa'nt the pants and coat that went to
make the man,
That all was in the fillin'—so you do the best you
can.
Another thing—"big meetin's"—where we'd court
and pray and sing,
And get some "froze" religion which would thaw
in early Spring.
Then we'd have our sleighin'—drivin' sometimes
clean to town,
And nine times out of ten that cussed sleigh would
sure break down

Right at the roughest part of road, where we'd
unhook and put
The girl upon old "Betsy's" back and we'd come
in by foot.
So, it's eas'ly seen that farm life has its dark side
an' its bright;
And when you've blended both you've surely got
this old world right—
That is, the town and country—but, let me take
my pick,
I guess I'll take the town one, with its smoke and
soot so thick,
As far as roundin' out life's span is rightfully con-
cerned;
But when it comes to buryin'—take me back where
oft I've yearned
For the ripenin' of the peaches an' the grapes, so
blue an' sweet,
And the "Early Harvest" apples that would make
a sick one eat.
Then, dig my grave—just anywhere, upon the dear
old place—
Of course, remote from pathways where nocturnal
ones would trace
My restless spirit hov'rin 'round—but let me say
right out,
That when I'm gone, I'm gone for good—no more
to wander 'bout;
For if I go to Heaven I'll be satisfied to stay;
And if the devil gets me he'll not let me get away.

JOSIAH HART

You never knew Josiah Hart,
From 'crost on Leeson's Run, I'm guessin'?
He wasn't—well—so awful smart,
But his disposition was a blessin'.
Never saw him—come what would—
In nought but just a mellow mood.

Everybody called him "Si"—
(Us country folks, you know'd never
Want the right name to apply
For fear 'twould stick to one forever)—
Once I called him "Mister Hart;"
You should have seen Josiah start.

Was six feet six and weighed—exact—
One hundred pounds; plus forty seven;
Many's the dry joke he's cracked
'Bout his proximity with Heaven;
Used to say he'd stoop first rate,
As he'd file through the Golden Gate.

Wore a pair of "number twelves"—
(Just in winter he'd be booted
As he'd say—"We suit ourselves;"
In summer time he'd go barefooted)
His pants were the high-water sort,
Tailored, snug by Mistress Hart.

Those pants! I see 'em once again—
The outside seam run sort o' pointing,
And perched above the instep. Then
'Bout half-foot 'bove the ankles jointing
The inside seam came. The whole concern
Was made real savin'—stem to stern.

His hat had long since "gone to seed,"
And shaped 'bout like a percolator;
'Twas really part of Si indeed;
In color like the sweet "potater."
With "hickory" shirt three sizes small,
Made up his wardrobe—Spring to Fall.

A family? I shold say he had!
Six boys—five girls—all hale and hearty;
And not a boy or girl was bad;
Si'd say they were his "Harty party."

They all grew tall and gaunt like Si;
The shortest one was six feet high.

Ask him how his family was —
  Always 'bout "as well as common"—
Aches or pains he'd reckon as,
  "Just a cross to man or woman."
Never heard him make a kick;
He'd say "Hit nevers wells the sick."

Had no habits that you'd rate
  'Mongst the bad ones. Never gambled;
Never known to dissipate;
  Nor ne'er in moonlight gently rambled
With the fair sex—'ceptin' his—
Just stayed at home and loved his Liz.

I said he'd never dissipate;
  That is, as far as drinkin' whiskey
Is concerned. But here I'll state
  That, perhaps, it would be risky
If you'd just one drink—and dry—
To hand o'er the bottle to Si.

Liked his "hillside-navy" well;
  Chewed and smoked to "beat the dickens;"
Occasion'ly had some to sell,
  But the family always used the "pickin's."
The sort he'd sell—I've understood—
Was the bottom leaf, and not much good.

Awful poor—and, yet he'd ne'er
  Envy those who rolled in riches.
Poor—but strictly on the square—
  'Though he wore high-water breeches.
Never gossiped—used to say —
"We're gittin' weaker every day."

Every Friday—with his load,
  You'd see him, and his sled or wagon,

Drivin' down the Gum Run road,
A team, that none would dare to brag on:
One a mare—he called her "Jule"
The other "horse" named "Jack"— a mule.

Always fetched a load of nice
Hoopholes, staves, tan-bark, potatoes;
That he'd trade for merchandise,
Like coffee, sugar and tomatoes;
"Calicoes," dress goods and jeans;
Hominy and navy-beans.

If perchance, the market price
On his stuff was far much lower
Than he thought; and merchandise
Was much higher in the store—
Never fussed, like other men;
"Traded"—then drove home again.

Went along his way for years;
Never seemed to fret or worry;
Stranger, he, to qualms and fears;
Never saw him in a hurry—
Never known to cuss, but twice;
His mule—these times—wa'nt actin' nice.

But, like all, no matter who,
Comes the time when Gabriel's Trumpet
Sounds the taps, and Si, he knew—
He says—"It's 'bout my time to hump it"—
Adding—"Guess I've lived it out,
Gabriel knows what he's about."

Buried him up high and dry
In the choicest lot; and, neighbors,
Many was the tear-dimmed eye
When old Si had ceased his labors.
Used to joke him while on earth,
But when gone we knew his worth.

Every Friday comes—no load
  Of tradin's seen with Si a drivin'
Down the muddy Gum Run road
  To "swap" for store-goods—thus a strivin'
For his family—every one—
Across the hills on Leeson's Run.

Awful poor—and yet he'd ne'er
  Envy those who rolled in riches.
Poor—but strictly on the square—
  'Though he wore high-water breeches.
Bet Saint Peter gave to Si
The finest pair of pants on high.

THE STORY OF TOM AND SCALES

In a cozy railroad station, on the———— Railroad, in a busy little town in West Virginia, four travelling men (the writer one of them) were waiting for the last train on Saturday night.

The station agent had just chalked on the bulletin board—"Train No.————one hour and twenty-five minutes late."

Now it requires no extra effort on the part of this special class of men to pass away an hour or so, or many hours or so, very congenially, but, if there is one thing above another, that they insist on keeping away from, it is the oral recapitulation of their business.

On this occasion, without an effort on their part, the living subjects appeared on the scene—a man and a dog.

The man, with every outward sign of past and present dissipation—haggard, stooped, dirty and blear-eyed, coupled with all other characteristics of the typical "Weary Willie," including the reticent.

The dog—of the famed "yellow" type. In size, that of an overgrown fox terrier. His hair (what there was of it) the long, glistening, bristling va-

reity; here and there patches the size of the palm of your hand were gone, leaving the skin in a scaly and apparently unhealed condition, hence his name, "Scales."

With the assistance of a couple of good stiff drinks of brandy—solicited,—and two dollars—unsolicited,—he very reluctantly told his life's story, —also—as far as he knew—the story of the dog.

We found him to be a man of only forty-seven, though in appearance, sixty-five. A brilliant fellow. At times overtaxing our limited vocabulary. So interesting was his story, and in order that we might have it in full, we gave him a seventy-eight mile ride that he could bring it to completion.

The ride was in the smoking compartment of a Pullman, and though it may have been years since he enjoyed this luxury, 'twas a self-evident fact that he had ridden many miles in such compartments before.

To say that we enjoyed every minute of his presence would be putting it mildly. His words were couched in a magnetic style and with such a blending of humor and pathos that, while he evidently felt that we were the benefactors, we felt just exactly the opposite. The lesson to us men in the prime of manhood was truly an indelible one.

While what I am now going to relate does not necessarily belong to the story, I cannot refrain from telling it:

The next day was, of course, Sunday. The hotel lobbies filled with traveling men whiling away the time, one way or another, until the first trains out on Monday morning. We appointed ourselves a committee of four, adding Tom and "Scales" for fear of some doubting Thomas wanting to question the bona fideness, and proceeded to resolve ourselves into a sextet of solicitors. The result went far beyond our dreamiest expectations. We spared no one in our earnest imploring for coin—traveling men, policemen, firemen, hotel clerks and proprietors, ministers, lady suffragists, members of the

Anti-Saloon League and of the Liquor Dealers' Association, lawyers, doctors, expressmen, porters, all falling willing victims to our livingly-featured subscription paper.

The result—one hundred and forty-one dollars and sixty cents! Think of it! Tom was now the recipient of a Turkish bath, clean shave, hair cut, new underclothes, socks, shoes, hat, stiff-bosomed shirt, a good heavy suit of clothes, collar, necktie, and to make the thing complete, some of the contributors, jocularly inclined, proposed a nice pair of tan kid gloves to match his shoes, and to add, also, a walking stick—all of which were forthcoming. His old raiment served to make a bonfire in a vacant lot near the scene of our benefactions.

"Scales" was given a clipping, three square meals and a collar bearing the following inscription:

TO DEAR SCALES
From His West Virginia Admirers.

In the evening new arrivals, and a little more soliciting, resulted in raising the sufficient funds for sending the two partners of joys and sorrows—mostly sorrows—to where Tom, at one time, called home. Monday morning the rejuvenated twain, amid the well wishes of at least fifty of their *friends,* started homeward.

The most amusing chapter in the whole story is, when "Scales" saw his master in his new outfit, had it not been that his (Tom's) voice remained unchanged, there would have been *no reconciliation.*

I now append in verse, rhyme, effusion, or whatever you may see fit to call it, the story Tom told at the railway station and on the train:

TOM AND SCALES

I'll try and tell this weirdish story,
  In the sense I heard it told,
By a creature—bent and hoary—
  'Twasn't years that made him old.

* * * *

"Scales," come here—come here to me!
There isn't one would do you harm,
Stretch out nice and gracefully
Before the fire and get real warm;
As our journey takes us through—
Wintry winds for me and you.

"I can't guess what you have done,
That I, a curse, am thrust upon you.
Did you hoot the moon or sun,
Or scoff the 'Milkmaid's Path'—dog on you?
Or, has it ever been your plan
To play deceitful tricks on man?

"Don't rest well? The hearth is hard;
Your poor head doesn't rest well on it;
Here's my old bandanna, pard—
Just lay your head upon it.
There! that's better. Now sleep on,
'Till your doggish nap is done.

"You ask me 'bout his queerish name—
'Scales?' Now, I will tell it you—
His christening, the result of shame;
The christener never this shame knew.
You'll note his hair's in patches gone,
And scales turn up where hair was on.

" 'Twas thus: This faithful dog and I
Were tramping our undestined way,
Beneath a frosty, wintry sky,
Weak from hunger. Oh, that day!
Just the hour for mid-day meal
That Nature asks in woe or weal.

"We spied a prosp'rous looking home (?),
And round we went the famed back tread,
This grand old dog and I—a bum,
To ask for e'en a crust of bread;
For when your stomach walls do meet,
This smallest morsel's mighty sweet.

"Did we get it? No. Instead
  We got from her (an Amazon)
A pail of water—boiling red.
  She did her best to throw it on
My very face; (you hate such tales)
I dodged the draught, it struck poor 'Scales.'

"Poor dog! E'en yet it makes me sad,
  Whene'er I tell or think of it.
I wonder how he's ever glad
  With naught but me, and me not fit
The best day that I ever saw,
To even shake his honest paw.

"But off we went at rapid tread
  Away from her whom God hath wrought
In His own image. I've heard said,
  The devil some poor souls has bought.
And surely this one ne'er would try
To sing with saintly souls on high.

"The air was chill. My clothes were few.
  My good friend's life was all with me;
I stripped my heavy shirt and drew
  It 'round poor 'Scales,' so mercif'ly.
I found good hearts in wandering, too,
That helped to pull my good friend through.

"And so—'twas on one springtime day—
  When we were trundling by a school,
The children all were out at play—
  (And prone to laugh is most their rule;
Whene'er they spy a tramp like me
With shaggy dog especially)—

"Perhaps his wrecked appearance, though,
  And downcast eyes, appealed to them;
They spoke in gracious tones, you know,
  And ventured up, and petted him—
They called him 'Scaley'—soothingly;
This was his christening, there, to me.

"Now don't mistake me that I mean
That all back doors are cold and chill;
As many is the one I've seen
Through which I've gone and ate my fill;
While the free-givers heard my tales
And sympathized with me and—'Scales.'

"A little jerky in his dreams,
He always was a trifle fretful;
Though he sleeps, it always seems
That of me he's ne'er forgetful—
Once or twice while he slept on,
When he woke, he found me—gone.

"Gone to where? You'd ask me?
Gone to hunt a drink of whiskey;
Those who've e'er been on a spree
Know there's times when we feel risky
'Bout our heart and mind and breath—
Hovering quite 'tween life and death.

"Many's the poor unfortunate,
After days and nights of drinking,
Reach the cussed nervous state
Where it calls for sober'st thinking,
To break the clasp of old Remorse,
Astride his centaured green-eyed horse.

"And many—yes, your papers tell—
Never rally through this shaking—
Heart string snaps; Death sounds his knell—
Goes a trembling and a quaking,
'Crost that chasm—weird and wide—
'Crost that mystic 'Great Divide.'

"Scales," 'wake up, you've napped enough.
Come, I've had an invitation
To take a swig of real stuff—
Enough to cause intoxication.
Come, and I'll get you a bone,
And, p'raps some meat for munching on.

"Ha! that's fine—the real thing!
  Brings 'bout such rejuvenation!
Fit for any czar or king
  Or ruler of most any nation—
Except, perhaps, the ringed Zulu,
With it, he'd not know what to do.

"My name?—Well, now, that's hardly fair;
  It's been so long since I have heard
It spoken that I do declare—
  I'd hardly recognize the word.
But be it foul or be it fair—
Blot out one curse—I'm on the square.

"I was blessed with the best of health;
  A loving wife and children three;
And cursed with just enough of wealth—
  My name, my name is lost to me!
Just call me Tom—plain Tom, you know.
I'm reckoned dead—we'll leave it so.

"Now 'Scales,' lie down. Lie down again,
  And catch another little snooze,
No, I'll not leave—'twould give you pain
  Should I your confidence abuse.
My old bandanna 'neath your head?
Of course, I know that's what you said.

"Great dog! Not pretty, but so true,
  I would that all the human kind
Were just as trustworthy as you—
  Old yellow dog—with one eye blind;
The other one a-turning white.
He's spent his day—he's in his night.

"How did I get him?—I don't know.
  'Twas one morn after revelry,
I waked in pastures streaked with snow,
  With no one there but 'Scales' and me.
My friends (?) had evidently thrown
Me out in this cold world alone.

"And from that awful, awful morn
  This gracious dog has stuck by me.
Through all my mental self-wrought storm,
  He's stuck—not man—but dogfully.
And my one prayer, my only one,
Is, that he lives till I am done.

"Then if that prayer be granted me,
  One more request I'll ask of you—
When in that 'Potter's Field' I be,
  Let 'Scales' lie with me—'Scales,' so true!
And on the head-board—if you can—
Print these four words—'A DOG and man.'"

SWEET GIRL GRADUATE

Fresh from the fields of bloodless strife,
  A conqueror you come;
Not to the sound of shrieking fife,
  Or musketry or drum:
No flags are floating to the breeze;
  No set salute is blared;
Yet, far more grand than all of these—
  The honors you have shared.

Your brow is decked with wreath of green,
  So emblematical
Of mastery; though steel as keen
  As yours would rise to fall.
But with your armor girded on,
  Your trusty blade on high,
You fought your way to triumph. Won
  With motto, "Do or die."

Your suns of toil; your restless moons,
  Are numbered with the past;
Your chill Decembers; gloomy Junes
  Now float at lowest mast;